CONSTANTIA NEVILLE;

OR,

THE WEST INDIAN.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

HELENA WELLS,
AUTHOR OF "THE STEP-MOTHER," &c.

———Behold the ways
Of Heaven's eternal destiny to man,
For ever just, benevolent, and wise:
That *Virtue's* awful steps, howe'er pursued
By vexing Fortune and intrusive pain,
Should never be divided from her chaste,
Her fair attendant, *Pleasure.*

AKENSIDE.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

TO an indulgent Public, of whose candour and liberality I have abundant reason to be sensible, "The West Indian" is presented. I am not without a hope that its moral inculcations, and general tendency to promote the exercise of the active virtues, will entitle it to some degree of attention from those who are in general but little disposed to think favourably of any work that appears in the form of a Novel.

While the younger part of the fair sex continue to devote so large a portion of their time to the light

reading which circulating libraries furnish, it is incumbent on those who employ the pen with a view to their edification, to avail themselves of the same channels for conveying useful lessons; which might not be perused under any other form.

In endeavouring to illustrate the advantages to be derived from domestic instruction, and the happiness which parents may find in seeking to secure the affections of their children, by a reciprocation of kindnesses, without granting improper indulgences, I have been under the necessity of delivering my sentiments with great freedom, on the evil consequences too often resulting from a contrary mode of education, by which the daughter some-

sometimes attains the age of a woman, without having considered her parents as objects of filial reverence, or at all interested in promoting her felicity.

To aim at copying existing manners being far more difficult than to soar into the regions of romance, I have, in many parts, delineated scenes, and related conversations, as they have actually come under my own observation; trusting rather to real incidents for producing conviction, than to those created by the imagination. In making this declaration, I disclaim all personality, though I am well aware that many will find likenesses to my portraits in individuals, to whose habits of life and modes of thinking I am

an utter stranger. That in some instances I have endeavoured to record living excellence, I will not deny. Among the friends, to whose zealous exertion I am indebted for the numerous supporters of the "young exotic," it would not have been difficult to select many more, equally deserving of the same distinction. Their kindness is engraven on my heart in characters too indelible ever to be erased.

I cannot conclude without offering my sincere acknowledgments to the literary censors, who, in consideration of the morality of my sentiments, and my fervent zeal in the cause of truth, have judged me with a lenity, which has encouraged me, on the present occasion, to deliver,

liver, without fear, my opinions on various subjects, apparently unconnected with the adventures of "Constantia Neville." To the Critic and the Public is her history now committed, by their

Much obliged,

And obedient servant,

HELENA WELLS.

Little Park-street, Westminster,
April 15, 1800.

ERRATA.

FIRST VOLUME.

Page 83, line 9, for *had*, read *has*.
—— 92, — 14, for *has*, read *was*.
—— 128, — 15, before *knowledge*, insert *a*.
—— 200, motto, line 3, for *flow*, read *glow*.
—— 229, — 6, for *inward*, read *inwardly*.
—— 249, — 18, after *o'* add *'em*.

SECOND VOLUME.

Page 24, line 21, for *her*, read *his*.
—— 37, — 20, for *their*, read *the*.
—— 85, — 19, for *friend* read *friends*.
—— 94, — 21, for *adventure*, read *adventures*.
—— 230, — 5, for *thus*, read *this*.
—— 288, — 2, for *her*, read *his*.

THIRD VOLUME.

Page 70, line 6, dele *h*, in *exhorbitance*.
—— 201, last line, for *he*, read *the*.

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CONSTANTIA NEVILLE;

OR,

THE WEST INDIAN.

CHAPTER I.

Merit like his, the fortune of the mind,
Beggars all wealth.

THOMSON.

THE family of Neville, though not distinguished by high birth, splendid fortune, or from its members holding an elevated rank in either church or state, was of that respectable order in society that entitled all who belonged to it to be denominated of the *gentry*, although there had been instituted

in England as serious an inquiry into the pretensions of those who write *Gent.* after their name, as is recorded to have taken place at Oviedo, previous to the marriage of Gil Blas de Santillane.

Robert Neville was the only surviving son of a man of considerable talents, who had at his death left him no patrimony but an unblemished honour, and a strong recommendation to the patronage of a tried friend, in whose accompting-house he had been placed some years before, when on completing his education to the entire approbation of his instructors; he had himself expressed a desire for becoming qualified for the management of commercial concerns, conceiving as he did, that there was no character more truly honourable than that of a British Merchant.

Fortunately

Fortunately for Robert, Mr. Charles Hayman fully merited the good opinion his father had imbibed of him, and by his friendship he was sheltered from those storms which assail inexperienced, unprotected youth. The diligence and application displayed by Neville at the desk, could only be exceeded by the ardour with which he bestowed every interval of leisure on the cultivation of his talents. The facility with which he had formerly acquired the dead languages, induced him now to apply to the study of living ones; those which were of most use in transacting the business of Messrs. Hayman and Co. *viz.* the German and French, soon became familiar to him. The indisposition of the person who conducted the foreign correspondence for the house, giving Mr. Hayman a great deal of personal trouble, occasioned Robert to offer his services, which were found so important, as to

induce his patron to propose to his elder brother and partner, resident at Hamburgh, to send the young man thither for two years, that he might be farther initiated in the mysteries of commerce, and have better opportunities for becoming a linguist than a residence in London could afford; not doubting that on his return he would prove a powerful auxiliary to himself; a confidential assistant in the foreign department being very essential to the prosperity of the establishment.

This arrangement meeting with a hearty acquiescence from Mr. Hayman, our Tyro on his arrival at his destined port, had the satisfaction of finding that both partners were equally disposed to second his views for improvement. A thirst for knowledge had always been the predominant feature of young Neville's character. When at school, he performed the tasks that were

were assigned him with a promptness that astonished, as much as it delighted, his preceptors. His proneness to *mischief*, and his hatred of *dunces*, were alike proverbial, and when sometimes compelled to act with them in dangerous exploits, which cannot be performed by youth except in a body, those of them who were forced to acknowledge his superiority in the presence of their school-master or his assistant, were on such occasions very ready to lead him into difficulties, in the hope that he might incur punishment, which they would have been content to share for the gratification of seeing his proud spirit humbled. His presence of mind however seldom failed him in the moment of detection, and the ingenuity discoverable in his attempts to annoy the neighbouring farmers, as well as his known adherence to truth when questioned on any subject, where a partial confession

would have been received by those who were unwilling to affix any blame to his conduct, unless where it became unavoidable for the sake of example, gave an early indication of what might be expected from his abilities and virtues, when their effervescence was directed to proper objects, and the *boy* was ripened into *man*. That he had always been placed under the care of persons of discernment was his peculiar good fortune, they clearly perceived that it would be conducive to their own interest, to suffer in him a spirit of enquiry, which in others they might have deemed expedient to repress.

During this residence of Neville in the house of Mr. Hayman at Hamburgh, he had formed designs, and cherished hopes, on the accomplishment of which much of the future happiness of his life depended; I must therefore introduce my reader to the family

family circle of Mr. Hayman, and relate some of the changes that occurred while Neville was a member of it.

Mr. and Mrs. Hayman had been several years married without having children, and both being fond of domestic pleasures, they had, after the maturest deliberation, sent for a young person to live with them, whose parents were relations of Mr. Hayman, and whom after a little time they adopted, determining also to give her a daughter's portion.

The family of Louisa Carleton were not a little elated by this distinction, though each of her sisters could not help regretting that she had not been chosen in her stead; both of these young ladies being well assured that either of them were better fitted to shine in an exalted sphere than the meek unambitious Louisa, who had

been named for the mother of Mr. Hayman, with no expectation that she would benefit from possessing that appellation, though it had in reality guided her son and his wife, in the election they had made of her, in preference to the eldest and youngest daughter of Mr. Carleton. This gentleman had brought up his family in a respectable manner, giving to each that kind of education which he thought consistent with his fortune, and the moderate line of life in which it was likely they would be placed.

Louisa Carleton was fifteen at the time Mr. Hayman applied to her father for permission to take her with him to the continent, and on her arrival there, no expence was spared to render her an accomplished woman; she had been three years under the protection of this worthy couple when Neville, who had just entered his twenty-first

ty-first year, was added to the household.

The ease and cheerfulness of Louisa made her peculiarly attractive to those who were permitted to partake of its effects so frequently, as must naturally happen among people who meet daily at the same table; that Robert Neville should feel himself much interested for this fair lady, without being able, (perhaps from not having attempted to analyze the nature of his feelings) to ascertain exactly why he was so, will not appear surprising. The approach of her birth-day, when she would attain the age of nineteen, created some bustle in the house of Mr. Hayman, from his intending to give a great entertainment on the occasion at his villa, to which were invited a number of the principal merchants and their families, besides some foreigners of distinction who were then at Hamburgh. Neville had

often invoked the tuneful Nine, nor had his trips to Parnassus been deemed unsuccessful; he had however till now employed his pen on no theme that interested his heart as much as it occupied his mind. His attempts to celebrate the natal-day of his beloved Louisa were so often repeated, and proved so abortive, that he had nearly relinquished his design in despair, when one of the sisterhood who patronize luckless poet's *in love*, came at this critical period to his aid, and though the performance did not meet his own approbation, he yet resolved that it should be delivered to his mistress, through a medium which could not assist conjecture, as to the person from whose pen it might be supposed to proceed.

The paper being presented to Louisa in the presence of Mrs. Hayman, as hey were entering the drawing-room, a little

a little before the time at which the company were expected to assemble; on a cursory perusal, she *blushing like the damask rose,* put it into the hands of Mrs. Hayman, who perceiving the purport of the lines, deposited them in her pocket-book, to bring forward on a proper occasion.

Dinner being over, and the dessert brought in; previous to the health of the day being drank, Mrs. Hayman, to the utter confusion of her lovely *protegée,* produced the scroll, requesting at the same time that Mr. Neville would read the contents for the benefit of the company; this unexpected command, for such it was considered, it will be readily imagined not a little embarrassed our poet; in a few minutes, however, he recovered himself sufficiently to enable him to do justice to the composition, the conclusion of which being wound up with a well-

turned compliment to the donor of the feast, and the guests assembled at his hospitable board, contributed not a little to promote general conviviality, as well as to prevent those parts of the poem expressive of admiration of the lady to whom it was addressed, being much noticed, the reciter taking special care to lay no emphasis on any passage, excepting those which admitted of general construction.

Mr. Hayman was so delighted with the whole, that he insisted as soon as his dear girl's health had been drank with proper honour, that that of the unknown contributor to the entertainment should immediately follow, expressing at the same time a wish that if present, he would avow himself, in order that he might be invested with some token of favour from the fair hand of the lady whose accomplishments and virtues he had so successfully

fully celebrated; this declaration producing no claimant for the promised honours, the toast past *nem. con.* the young men who were not capable of mounting their Pegasus, wondering at the forbearance of the author, while those who were, envied him the applauses that were awarded, while they approved the good sense that dictated his silence, as, had he not been shielded by it from minute criticisms, his Pindaric might soon have experienced their lash, and stripped of its real beauty by ignorant pretenders, who are ever most unwilling to acknowledge superiority, where they feel an internal evidence that it really exists. Louisa Carleton had but one surmise on the occasion, and she was determined to assure herself whether it was well founded. The unusual reserve and distance of manner in Neville strengthened her suspicion that *he was the man*, and

and her heart bounded with delight at the idea.

The festivity that reigned in the mansion of his patron, soon subdued the caution of the youth, who on leading his fair mistress from the saloon in which they were dancing, to that where refreshments were to be procured, poured into her ear a tale of love too intoxicating not to make a deep impression. In such a moment she asserted that the lines she had that day received were the production of his muse; he pleaded guilty to the charge, while her passive hand endured the grateful pressure of his, for the commendations bestowed by her on the trifle which he deemed so unworthy of the subject. The air of gaiety and vivacity with which Louisa re-entered the ball-room, and the grace and agility displayed by her partner and herself in the mazy

dance,

dance, called forth the praises of all present, who like Mr. and Mrs. Hayman were desirous of promoting innocent recreations.

Louisa light of heart, her mind occupied by the occurrences of the day, retired to her chamber, where in a few minutes overpowered by fatigue she sunk into peaceful slumbers, when if she did dream, the *foregone conclusion* raised no visions but those of happiness and joy. Not so her lover, that he was beloved afforded him but little consolation. The probable heiress of Mr. Hayman's fortune would never with the approbation of her friends become his bride, and without such approbation, he was determined not to seek to obtain her hand. His own uncertain prospects, and want of paternal fortune, for the first time in his life he considered a serious evil; hitherto he had not bestowed a thought on futurity.

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The precipitate declaration of his passion, and the avowed susceptibility of Louisa, were to him circumstances equally to be lamented.

To reward the unexampled kindness and liberality of the Haymans, to him a friendless orphan, by engaging the affections of one for whom they must have very different views, was, in truth, he considered, a crime of the blackest dye. To sleep, while a prey to such contending emotions, was hardly possible; he, therefore, employed part of the night in composing, in plain simple prose, a statement to Louisa of the bitter regret which pervaded his bosom, for having suffered himself to express to her sentiments, the sincerity of which, from his circumscribed fortune, might be doubted by those with whom she was connected.

This

This self-imposed task completed, he strove to court the embrace of "Nature's kind restorer," but this "sweet soother of the wretched" eluded his grasp. He rose to business at the usual hour, though little able to transact any; dreading to encounter the eyes of Louisa, he would have avoided making one at the general breakfast-table, had not Mr. Hayman requested his attendance, praising at the same time his diligence. The kindness of his master, in some measure, dispelled the gloom of Neville, while his reserve and evident avoidance of her, astonished, as much as it mortified, Louisa. The gay structure fancy had been busy in forming, was in a moment demolished. She dreaded she knew not what, and found her heart so oppressed by grief, she was obliged to leave the room, saying, that a few days of dissipation, like the last, would completely unhinge her. In rising to

open

open the door, Neville contrived to slip into the hand of Louisa the billet, the composing which had occasioned his haggard looks and early rising. The perusal sufficed to convince her of the error of her conduct in so early avowing her attachment. In her own mind, convinced that the engaging manners and intrinsic worth of her lover were as forcibly acknowledged by the Haymans as either of them could desire, she believed they would be inclined to promote their union rather than to raise obstacles to impede it. The arguments of Neville to prove the unsuitableness of their condition, were consequently not deemed to be just. "I have been too easily won," she exclaimed, "and therefore merit the contempt with which I am rejected." This reflection completely awakened her pride; rallying her spirits, she determined to shew she was not a *love-lorn damsel*. Luckily for the preservation

vation of her dignity, Mr. Hayman found it necessary to dispatch one of his clerks on business at some distance from Hamburgh, and he chose to intrust it to Neville in preference to any other. This arrangement taking place in a few days after the *Gala*, Louisa had been enabled to support her part tolerably well; the despair and anguish of mind of her lover preventing him from seeking any opportunity of conversing with her alone, he was yet ignorant of the impression made by his last address. Soon after his departure, Louisa ventured to reperuse the epistle, the contents of which had so deeply wounded her, and was confounded at failing to discover any expression that could justly excite anger, on the contrary, she found her esteem and affection increase, in proportion that the arguments made use of convinced her reason of the little likelihood there was, that the sanction

of

of her friends for their marriage would be readily obtained. Thus, while relieved from the pressure of self-reproach, which since the day succeeding her natal one had never forsaken her, she only exchanged one sorrow for another; the present was, however, much easier to be borne than the former. Youth, fertile in expedient, and ardent in expectation, opens many avenues to happiness, while assured of the unalterable esteem and affection of the object beloved. An event altogether unlooked for proved propitious to the union of two people whom Nature had formed to contribute to the happiness of each other.

The pregnancy of Mrs. Hayman, which had been some months known to herself, though carefully concealed, for fear of disappointment, was now publicly announced; and before the return of Neville she had brought her husband

husband a son. Louisa set so little value on the gifts of fortune, that she would unfeignedly have rejoiced at this circumstance, although by it no impediments to her happiness had been removed.

Her quick-sightedness, on other occasions, did not forsake her on this, nor did she fail to read in the countenance of her lover, that his hopes were also awakened by the birth of the long-promised heir.

Having brought our history to that period when Neville was expecting to be remanded back to England, and his principal was devising means for protracting his departure, we shall take a view of the interior of Mr. Charles Hayman's house in Devonshire-square, leaving the lady in the straw to the care of her gossips, who were all unani-

mous in declaring, that young master Hayman was a prodigy of beauty, and would, in due time, equal his father in wisdom, and his mother in goodness.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Resolution and steadiness are excellent qualities, but it is the application of them upon which their value depends.

LYTTLETON.

MR. Charles Hayman, though considered a bachelor by his acquaintances, had been some years privately married to an amiable and sensible woman, who had blessed him with several lovely children, as well as contributed essentially to promoting his happiness and comfort. Long before he was apprised of the increase of his brother's family, he had meditated introducing his wife to his friends; the causes that now operated to produce a disclosure of his situation, it is not necessary

cessary to investigate, neither is it incumbent on us to enquire what motives could have influenced so respectable a character, in leading him to form a clandestine union with a woman who was his equal in every respect, fortune alone excepted, and whom he might always have been proud to acknowledge as the mistress of his house and table, spacious and elegant as was the latter, and select as were the company who frequented the former.

Occupied by his own arrangements, the birth of his nephew was but little the subject of his thoughts, till the arrival of his much-esteemed Neville drew his attention from present objects. His enquiries, at last, tended to the fair Louisa, and how she bore this disappointment of her hopes. The friendly manner in which they were made, animated the young man to a proinpt confession of his attachment, and giving

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an assurance that it was reciprocal, he added, that of those who were immediately interested in the birth of the young stranger, none more sincerely rejoiced at it than did Louisa, who, consequently, hoped that their mutual affection might now be indulged without fear of blame being imputed to either party. At another season, the worthy merchant might have descanted on the impropriety of early marriages, and the folly of a man, without a settled habitation, or ample means to procure one, thinking of taking unto himself a wife. Fortunately for our applicant, on the contrary, there arose in the mind of his patron, a very lively recollection of the scenes of dissipation in which he had been engaged from the age of twenty to thirty, from the dangers attendant on which course of life he would have been happily preserved, had he been then attached to a virtuous woman, and desirous of mak-

ing her his wife as soon as circumstances would permit. The calm serenity he enjoyed, as a husband, and the domestic comforts now possessed by him, by the removal of his wife and children to his own place of residence, also operated in no small degree to make him give his hearty concurrence to his young friend's pursuit, while he assured him no effort on his part should be wanting to promote the success of any plan, which could tend to the acceleration of his marriage with Louisa Carleton.

The gratitude of the lover, and his acknowledgements of the lively sense he entertained of the boundless goodness that dictated such sentiments, may be easily supposed.

Mr. Hayman did not content himself with simple declaration; he immediately communicated to his brother the

the wishes of the young people, and his own disposition to serve them, asking his advice as to retaining Neville in London, or whether in one of their houses on the Continent, there was a better opening for a young man of his abilities? Though surprized at the contents of his brother's letter, Mr. Hayman was not displeased. A year of probation he determined the young people should pass at a distance from each other, and thinking ultimately to settle Neville at Rotterdam, he resolved that, during that interval he should reside there, taking an active part in the business conducted in that city by a branch of the house of Hayman.

Louisa, while separated from her lover and intended husband, had sufficient leisure for reflecting on the probable consequences of the connection she had formed. She was not so weak as to prefer *love in a cottage* to *love in a*

splendid habitation. Her attachment for Neville had for its basis, *esteem*, with a profound respect *for the powers* of his *mind*, and the no less *valuable* qualities of his *heart*. To discover that she was the object on which he had placed his undivided and disinterested affections, had infused through her whole frame sensations, which however indefinable to the cold and phlegmatic, will, I am persuaded, to many of my readers, appear no unnatural concomitants of a first attachment at twenty. As our young friend had no more romance about her than is allowable at her age (for a *precise mercenary* young woman who could tolerate?) she did not spend her leisure hours in perusing fictitious narratives of true and faithful lovers, whose example she was emulating. No! she devoted a great portion of her time to reading the best works that have been written on the duties of the female sex. Perceiving some errors in the

the management of Mrs. Hayman's nursery, she religiously resolved that her offspring should be reared under her own immediate inspection, and that as a poor man's wife, the more she had been accustomed to economize even in the disposal of her hours, the more she would probably be able to promote the success of his undertakings for the establishment of his family. She thus early strove to fit herself for the humble situation which it was her lot to fill, and her regard for Neville was not a little strengthened by the proofs of his superior understanding, which his correspondence with her furnished. Mr. and Mrs. Hayman had, without doubt, other views in separating the young people, than were declared. They believed that the addresses of men of superior rank and fortune would suffice to convince Louisa, that the sacrifice she was about to make to Neville of splendour and gaiety, would

at no distant period be deemed too severe to be submitted to with cheerfulness. They also knew the young man well enough to be assured, that the least reluctance on the part of his mistress to fulfil her engagement, would induce him at once to relinquish his pretensions, and to banish himself from her presence, rather than by his stay to remind her of her inconstancy and want of stability.

Judging of this as of most juvenile attachments, these inferences might have been drawn with little chance of their not being justified by the event. The decided behaviour of the young lady to those who sought to make their court acceptable to her, soon shewed the strength of her attachment, and left on the minds of both her protector and protectress, an impression of her firmness and contempt of wealth, which, in the end, not a little enhanced

hanced her value in their eyes. On the return of Neville, so satisfactory did all investigations respecting the young people's present and future plans appear, that Mr. Hayman entered as warmly into their interests as they could desire. A small, but comfortable house at Rotterdam, well furnished with every necessary for a family, he gave to the bride; nor were Mrs. Hayman's presents less valuable; promising, also, to stand godmother for the first child, whose education and maintenance, whether male or female, she furthermore said should be provided for at her expence. To the bridegroom, Mr. Hayman, of London, presented a thousand pounds in stock, half of which sum was to accumulate, with interest, for the benefit of the children of the marriage, and not to be sold, or transferred, but by their joint consent, when all who might survive had attained to the age of twenty-one.

With such marks of esteem and liberality did our young couple quit the hospitable mansion of their patron, who, in addition to other favours, had obtained Mr. Carleton's full acquiescence in the marriage of his daughter.

Twelve months rolled on, and found our rational lovers as much under the influence of the blind deity as before Hymen had lighted his torch to sanction their union.

Possessing the full confidence of his principals, Neville was pitched upon to go out to the West-Indies on business of importance to the concern. His wife, who would have braved every danger, rather than suffer the agonies of separation, was in that state in "which women wish to be who love their lords," consequently she could not venture to be his companion on the voyage; she agreed, however, to his proposal of

her

her removing to England, where, in her father's house, she could receive that assistance which among strangers might be wanting in the hour of need.

Mr. Carleton received his daughter, after nearly seven years absence, with paternal tenderness, her sisters preserving the most chilling indifference, though witnesses of the emotions of parental and filial affection. Neville, on perceiving their apathy, and the effect of it on his wife, almost repented of the step he had taken, yet was compelled, by necessity, to conceal even from the partner of his joys and griefs, that all the latter were occasioned by his fears for her safety, and that she would find little resemblance to the good Mrs. Hayman in either of her sisters. Let those who have obeyed the calls of duty, in opposition to the dictates of nature, judge of the pangs which rent the bosom of Neville and

his wife, when the hour of his departure arrived.

Youth is not the season of despondency; when Mrs. Neville clasped to her bosom the son of him whose presence would have converted a barren plain into a wilderness of sweets, the tears which flowed plenteously from her eyes, were ecstatic; she remembered not that the father of the infant was then plowing the wide ocean, and might there meet an untimely grave; her confidence in the goodness of that Almighty power, who had supported her in the time of her trouble, was a cordial to her agitated spirits, and served to renovate her disordered frame. She felt assured of a re-union with her husband, and that together they would trace the features of each other in the countenance of their child, who was already in her eyes the fairest flower of the creation.

If this be enthusiasm, may every son and daughter of Adam possess some portion of its exhilerating properties: pleasures which affect only the senses are transitory and fleeting, but those which awaken adoration of the Deity, by convincing us that his power and goodness are infinite, may always be retained, and no heart glowing with such feelings, can ever be voluntarily guilty of injustice towards its fellow creatures.

In performing the first offices of the maternal character, how often has the wife of Neville, while gazing with delight on her sleeping infant, been ready to exclaim; "And are there mothers who leave such blooming innocents to the care of mercenary hirelings, and who, while they are repressing the nutriment with which nature furnishes them, even to the risk of their own health, can, without a sigh of regret, mark the

grateful affection of their offspring to her, who to gain her livelihood, becomes the dispenser of their food, and from whom, too frequently, is inhaled along with her milk latent seeds of disease, that sap the constitution, and consequently enfeeble the powers of the mind, leaving the unfortunate object a prey to all the ills which peculiarly assail a debilitated frame and weak intellects * !"

Finding little congeniality of sentiment in her sisters, who could scarcely refrain from openly expressing their disapprobation of her marriage, and of her having benefited so little by her connection with the Hayman family, Mrs. Neville very readily accepted of an invitation from Mr. Charles Hayman, to pass a month at his seat at

* This was written long before *Roscoe*'s poem of THE NURSE was presented to the public, and I never saw the original by Tansiglio.

Frognall,

Frognall, previous to her return to Rotterdam, to which place he purposed accompanying her, having arrangements to make owing to her husband's absence, which would require his attendance there for some weeks. The young stranger was made a Christian in the house of his father's patron, who with Mr. Carleton, and Mrs. Hayman of Hamburgh (by proxy) were the sponsors; Louisa, with true filial respect, naming him Montague after her father, who with his daughters, were invited by Mr. and Mrs. Hayman to partake of the hospitality and kindness which ever reigned where they presided. This mark of attention to her family was received with due gratitude by Mrs. Neville; and her sisters felt not a little elated by the distinction, which occasioned them to shew stronger symptoms of regard for her at parting, than they had ever done while she was an inmate of their father's house.

Satis-

Satisfactory letters arriving from her husband soon after her return to Rotterdam, Mrs. Neville was encouraged by Mr. Hayman, to expect him in Holland in less than six months; this interval she passed almost wholly recluse, devoting the greatest part of her time and attention to the performance of those duties, the practice of which she had found less difficult than in theory she had supposed possible; so certain it is, that whatever interests the heart concentrates exertion, and that which we desire to do well, is already half accomplished.

Paradoxical as it may appear, there is perhaps no remark more just, than that to a mind fertile in resources, no hours pass so swiftly away as those which are spent secluded from society. It may possibly be accounted for, from the days being unbroken by occurrences, and that in looking back, where we

we can catch at no fleeting shadow by which to distinguish one point of time from another, a week appears but as a day, and a month as a week.

While Neville's stay could be reasonably accounted for, his wife felt little or no anxiety, but when she observed an unusual gloom on the face of the persons who conducted the business in his absence, and that her letters both from Hamburgh and London were obscure, and accounted not for the detention of her husband, she became all at once a prey to the most dreadful apprehensions, nor did the receipt of a letter from her father at this period, evidently written with a view to prepare her for some heavy affliction, tend to quiet them; still less, duplicates of letters being received by the house, the originals of which had been entrusted to the care of her husband, of whose sailing for England

England there could now no doubt be entertained.

The arrival of Mr. Carleton at Rotterdam, bearing the dismal tidings of the insolvency of the House of Hayman, and that the vessel in which Neville had embarked, ought in the common course to have reached some port in Europe, almost bereft the unhappy Louisa of her senses; their preservation, as well as that of her health, arose from the ardent affection which she ever felt for her child. To live for his sake, was therefore her fixed resolution; also to instil into his infant mind the profoundest veneration for the character of his father, that he might one day prove himself worthy of the name he bore.

When her mind was sufficiently tranquil to bear a detail of every occurrence, how did the communications of Mr.

Mr. Carleton probe the feelings of his astonished daughter.

Mr. Hayman of Hamburgh, and his wife, had for many years placed their chief hopes of happiness on the prospect of having children, to whom they might leave their property. The lady had, in truth, known no real sorrow, but what arose from this desire being for a time ungratified; fearing that without this bond of union she might not have that hold on her husband's affections, the possession of which she knew to be absolutely essential to her own peace; she felt this disappointment more keenly than was consistent in professors of Christianity, who ought ever to have engraven upon their hearts, in indelible characters, "*Thy will be done.*" Mrs. Hayman was of the Catholic persuasion, and having been some years in a convent in German Flanders, she frequently, in imagination,

tion, anticipated her return to her former residence, believing that she could neither endure the indifference of her husband, or even if that were not perceptible, the bare possibility of his regretting that he had made her his wife.

We have seen the entire accomplishment of these hopes and wishes of both parties, and the consequent banishment of those fears, the indulgence of which was highly reprehensible, and for a time threatened to undermine one of the best constitutions with which woman was ever blest.

That the Great Disposer of events knows much better than we do what will prove blessings or curses, was never more strikingly verified than in the present instance.

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To bequeath to his son boundless wealth, became the ruling passion of Mr. Hayman, and this made him grasp at impossibilities, and enter into speculations of the most ruinous kind, some of them without previously consulting his brother, or any of his other partners, a mode of conduct which twelve months before no person would have more highly reprobated. The failure of crops on their West-India estate, added to a combination of untoward circumstances, compelled the London house to make a temporary stop; this brought forward claims on Mr. Hayman of Hamburgh, the extent of which his brother in vain sought to ascertain. Not to dwell minutely on what in the recital could awaken no pleasurable emotions, the elder Mr. Hayman sunk under the weight of his own reflections. Like too many men of the world, he had not in the hour of prosperity sought

to

to fortify himself for that of adversity. He feared to encounter the contumely of his fellow-men, and therefore, impiously dared to rush into the presence of his Maker, with all his imperfections on his head.

Mrs. Hayman, it has been already said, had enjoyed the advantages of religious instruction. Her preceptors had, however, unfortunately for her, sought to inspire her with a desire for monastic seclusion, rather than to fortify her mind for sustaining the ills attendant on active life. On experiencing so dreadful a stroke, the grief and horror that took possession of her soul almost suspended the faculty of thinking. It was only at sight of her child that she could shed a tear, and strange will the sequel appear, that after her spirits were a little calm, she declared that she had firmly resolved on separating her-

self from it, as she believed her salvation could not be effected while there was an earthly object constantly before her, to remind her of her former unthankfulness to God for the mercies showered down upon her, which, while the desired boon was withheld, appeared to be of no value. The state of her mind certainly unfitted her for performing the offices of a mother, which had once afforded her such exquisite delight; and so far were her intellects affected by her misfortunes, that she extorted from a confidental friend and her husband, a solemn promise to take charge of her boy to England, and when there, to keep him in a situation utterly unknown to his father's relations; at the same time engaging that, from her own fortune, sums should be remitted to defray the expences incurred on his account, as well as a remuneration for their care, on condition that they would adopt him as their own,

retaining

retaining only his christian name of Marmaduke, by which, and other tokens, he might at some future period be recognized. Through these means she hoped to keep from his knowledge, till arrived at years of maturity, the dreadful tale of his father having perished by his own hands. The lady's retiring into the convent where she had been educated, was the natural consequence of her having formed such a plan for the disposal of her son, whom, notwithstanding a strong predilection in favour of her own religion, she directed to be brought up in that of the Church of England, as being professed by his father and family.

No sooner was Louisa apprized of this unlooked for catastrophe, in the family of those to whom she had owed so much, than she felt the most bitter regret at not having been present to soothe the sorrows of her, whom for so many years

years she had been permitted to look up to as a parent: the possibility that she might have been permitted to take charge of the child, who should have shared with her own every attention in her power to pay, hung upon her spirits. The uncertainty she endured respecting the fate of her beloved husband, soon however, absorbed every other consideration; by the advice of her father, the house and furniture were disposed of, and with him she returned to England. On her arrival, having hired the greatest part of a cottage in his neighbourhood, she determined there to wait with trembling anxiety for farther accounts from those shores, to which her hopes and fears were perpetually recurring.

CHAP

CHAP. III.

As the mind acquires new vigour from communication with vigorous and well regulated minds, it is impossible to express how much it loses and degenerates by the continual commerce and intimacy of grovelling and puny characters; there is no contagion that spreads so rapidly as this.

MONTAIGNE.

IT will be easily conceived that the anxiety of Neville, while crossing the Atlantic, fully equalled that of his wife.

Finding on his arrival at Surinam, that the interests of Messrs. Hayman had been shamefully neglected, the coercive measures he was obliged to adopt, in order to compel their agents to furnish him with a full statement of their proceedings, gave him a great deal to do, and the investigation tended so little to satisfy his mind, as to the probability of his remitting to England the sums that were

were expected; he became so completely the slave of business, as to blunt for a time the acuteness of his feelings respecting his own family.

In vain were his repeated attempts to convert property into cash, unless on terms so disadvantageous, that he conceived, while acting for others, he might not be justified in granting. Having obtained proper securities for monies due, and regulated as far as was in his power all affairs of the house at Surinam, he departed to take a tour of the English Leeward Islands, in the hope of being there more successful in his transactions. What diligence, zeal, and activity could compass, was accomplished by Neville; he knew, however, that instead of the hundreds he was able to collect, as many thousands were requisite to satisfy the various claims which would then be made on his principals, he consequently became

eager to return to Europe, not doubting but the communications in his power to give, were ardently desired, and though far from pleasing, ought not to be delayed.

Before he embarked, letters from his wife announcing the birth of his son being delivered to him, he for a time banished from his recollection all concerns in which she was not the principal. The hope of meeting her and the dear pledge of their mutual affection in peace and safety, served to renovate both his health and spirits, which had suffered not a little from mental and bodily exertion. In a few days after going to sea, a violent storm arose, which nearly shattered their little vessel, and a leak being discovered, called for the aid of passengers as well as seamen to ward off its effects. To make the best of their way to the first port was now their only resource, and this

this unfortunately proved to be Porto Rico, where, notwithstanding the distressed condition of the bark, added to the solemn asseverations of every one belonging to it, that the violence of the storm alone had brought them to that shore to seek for shelter, the jealous vigilance of the Spanish governor put the whole company under arrest, on the pretext that they had been endeavouring to establish an illicit intercourse with the subjects of Spain; in corroboration of which, were produced, a number of dollars found on board, which it was presumed had been received in payment for articles of commerce already disposed of. To bend to the exigency of things, is a proof of wisdom: with arguments to induce this temper of mind, did Neville seek to soothe the captain, who was ready to commit acts of violence, not only on himself, but on every one, excepting him who ventured to approach him.—

 "What,

"What, sir" says the son of Neptune, "do *you* pretend to be at ease under "these circumstances, who with such "earnestness requested me to hasten "my departure, as you had business of "the utmost consequence which de- "manded your immediate presence in "London? do you preach patience "under this vile oppression? but the "king, my master, shall hear of my "injuries and avenge my cause, upon "this saucy Don." The action which followed this threat, obliged our expostulator to keep at an awful distance, while he explained to the enraged tar, that no man could feel their detention more severely than he did, and none would more readily unite in making an effort for their deliverance, which, however, he knew could not be effected under a certain number of days, and till some forms essential in the eyes of the people under whose jurisdiction they now had the misfortune

to

to be placed, were gone through; consequently he was determined to preserve his equanimity of temper, as by irritation, added to the heat of the weather and confinement, he might, perhaps, be unable to undertake the voyage when at liberty to proceed on it.

"That is well thought of, my young sir, replied the captain, "but for my soul, "I cannot think where you have ac- "quired this command over yourself; "when I recollect too how you storm- "ed at the seamen for flagging at the "pumps, while you were working like "a Hercules; for my own part, I be- "lieve without your spirited example, "we should have stood a good chance "of seeing the inside of Davy Jones's "locker, and though we are laid too for "the present, charming Sally and all, "why d'ye see, we may yet reef our "topsails and with a fair wind bear "off for Old England to our wives "and sweethearts, who, I dare say,

"are counting the time till our re-
"turn."

Some weeks elapsing before the governour declared the Britons no longer under his controul, was the cause of that anxiety respecting the fate of the ship, which led poor Mrs. Neville to fear the worst respecting her husband. After a tedious passage, to his great joy he landed at Portsmouth, and expecting to find Mr. Charles Hayman at his country house, which was on the road twelve miles from the capital, he bent his course thither, and was not a little struck at its deserted appearance, and still more so, at perceiving it in possession of low vulgar people, who were placed there to take care of the furniture, till the house was either let or sold. To the enquiry of where, or how, Mr. and Mrs. Hayman were, no information could be obtained; a reference to one of the trustees

for

for the estate, by whom they had been hired, being all the intelligence in their power to give.

Neville now found all his firmness forsake him; a change like this in such a family in so short a time! what might not have befallen his wife and child during the same interval. Distracted now by fears for their safety, he could not proceed to London; determined by a sudden impulse to seek Mr. Carleton, he immediately ordered horses to carry him to Nettlebury. He perceived walking on the road, and carrying a child, a servant whom he recognized as the attendant on Mrs. Neville when he left England. Her shriek at sight of him, soon precipitated him out of the chaise to fold his son in his arms. When the chaise drew up to her door, Louisa believed she should never more taste sorrow, but no sooner was she encircled in the embraces of her

husband, than her strength failed, she became insensible, and when recovered, could not for some time be persuaded that the events of the morning had actually happened.

Happy as our first parents in Paradise in the society of each other, Mr. and Mrs. Neville forgot not the calls of friendship and duty. To seek out his early friend and much respected patron, was therefore Neville's first business; to both, the meeting was peculiarly painful. Though exonerated from all blame, and treated by every person concerned with a liberality and respect which few but English creditors (who discriminate in a manner highly honourable to their feelings as men, between the *honest* and *fraudulent* bankrupt,) know how to pay, Mr. Charles Hayman did not feel himself perfectly at ease in London. At the same time, while his presence could be of any service in elucidating the compli-

complicated concerns of his house, he determined to do violence to his inclinations, rather than appear indifferent to the interest of those, whose confidence in his probity and honour had, from a combination of unfortunate events, been so ill requited. On the arrival of Neville, the trustees immediately requested his aid, offering him a handsome salary for the services he could render the estate, and their best recommendation and assistance afterwards, in whatever line of business he might deem eligible to pursue for his own profit. This mode of arrangement making the personal attendance of Mr. Hayman un necessary, he prepared to set out for Russia, whither he had been invited by persons of respectability, who held out fair prospects of success in a particular branch they wished him to enter into, and which were soon realized, to the great satisfaction of every one who pos-

sessed opportunities of judging how richly he deserved the gifts of fortune.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Neville were desirous of settling in England; the continental education of the latter, added to the unreserved communication with a man of such abilities as her husband possessed, made her the object of envy, and even censure of her sisters. Their notions were as contracted as the sphere in which they moved. In talking of the vicissitudes that had marked the Hayman family, Louisa was wounded to the quick at the illiberality of their observations. Their regrets were all awakened for themselves, in having partaken so little of the benefits which accrue from being on terms of intimacy with the powerful and wealthy. The sneer at the consequence affected by the wife of the *merchant's clerk*, had reached her ear, at seasons when she dreaded

dreaded that she should never again behold him, whom they thought to degrade by that appellation. Having lived so many years as the member of another family, it is to be owned that Louisa did not enter so minutely into the interests of that to which she belonged, as she otherwise would have done; she would then not have felt that expansion of mind which led her to seek approbation in the performance of her duty, rather than in the caresses and praises of her acquaintance. She might probably too, have made it a source of amusement to enquire what parties were formed in the neighbourhood every evening, and who were to dance together at the next assembly, for such she found to be the pursuits of her sisters, and therefore could no more participate in *their* pleasures, than they could comprehend *her* conformity to situation and humility, of which, in spite of their tak-

ing her to task for assuming importance she was not entitled to, they were compelled to acknowledge she daily gave proofs. We are so much the creatures of habit, and so prone to follow the example of those with whom we live, that I am not at all clear, if Louisa Carleton had been always an inhabitant of Nettlebury, she would have ranked a degree higher in the scale of perfection than her sisters. Of so much consequence to young people, is the society in which they mix from fifteen to twenty, years so precious, that could we, at any other period of our life, regain one of them, what would we not give in exchange! Yet how frequently do they pass away unregarded; dress, balls, plays, and such frivolous occupations, leaving not a space for reflection or the cultivation of talents, which, then neglected, can never afterwards yield the same harvest.

In

In a year after the departure of Mr. Hayman for Russia, Neville and his wife embarked for Barbadoes, with a view of ultimately settling in that island; though being still in the employ of the trustees for the Hayman estate, he had affairs to transact for them at other islands, which would retard his entrance into business on his own account. The countenance, however, which he obtained by his skilful manner of conducting what was entrusted to his charge, ensured him a welcome reception from every person with whom he had dealings. The hospitality and kindness of the Barbadians, soon found its way to the heart of Mrs. Neville, who would have been perfectly happy, but for the black servants, and that she had been prevailed on, by her husband, to leave her son behind to the care of her sister Anne; she having shewn herself not devoid of sensibility, while Montagu was removed

ed from town for change of air, to the house of his grandfather, after his recovery from the measles. Mr. Carleton had observed his daughter's extreme solicitude as a mother, and thinking it possible that she might not agree with the climate, considered her being without incumbrance (particularly as she was again pregnant) on encountering its vicissitudes, of much importance to her future welfare; it was therefore at his request as well as her husband's, that Mrs. Neville consented to relinquish to her sister the charge of so precious a deposit as that of her only son.

The settlement of a family in a country so little the theatre of adventure as that of Barbadoes, could be attended with few incidents worthy of recording. That our worthy couple found it requisite to call into action all the philosophy and lessons of œconomy, which as theorists

theorists they had endeavoured to familiarise to themselves, is most true; nor is it less worthy of remark, that no change of climate, or example of others, could deter Mrs. Neville from the performance of those offices to her children, which, while separated from her husband, had afforded her such ecstatic delight.

That their first-born might not grow up ignorant of his parents, Montagu was sent for at five years old, and remained with them three years, when it became necessary to send him home in order to be placed at school. The elder Miss Carleton, soon after the departure of her sister for the Western world, married a gentleman of some family, who, however, had previously run out great part of his fortune, and was professedly a schemer, in the hope that his speculations would be of advantage to the

the community, as well as profitable to himself.

This lady had always affected to despise her sister's pitiful marriage, but on the arrival of her nephew in England, fitted out as became a gentleman's son, accompanied by bills on *good* men in the city, with orders that no expence should be spared on his education, she began to judge very differently. Her husband, Mr. Bellmour, had talked much of a wealthy relation in Jamaica, who had expressed a strong desire for his going out to that island, and so irksome was his situation in his own country, that his wife believed any change must be for the better. She therefore encouraged him in his new project for retrieving his fortune, suggesting the propriety of taking their passage for Barbadoes, in order to pay her sister a visit, from which island they could easily

sily get a conveyance to the place of their destination.

The arrival of this couple with their children, a son and daughter, gave no little uneasiness to Mrs. Neville. She saw through her brother-in-law's artifices before they were developed by her husband; otherwise his natural openness and friendliness of disposition, might have led him to render services that would have only produced a demand for others, and probably in the end implicated his own character, along with that of a man who had lost every fragment of his, previous to his resolving on his Trans-atlantic expedition.

Mr. Bellmour soon found that there was no field for him on a spot where lived two people, who, while shewing him every rite of hospitality he could desire, were resolute in giving no countenance

tenance to his chimerical projects. He therefore bent his course to Jamaica, where in a very short time he fell a sacrifice to intemperance and the diseases of the climate, leaving his wife and children no legacy but debt, and neither of them any cause to regret his loss, his relation affording them that protection and support, of which his conduct when living, had nearly deprived them.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The talent of a father is to multiply himself, and to appear to his children under different forms: to one as a master; to another as a friend.

GANGANELLI'S LETTERS.

THE industrious and active Neville, now began to reap the fruits of his toil, that of receiving his friends in his own house constituted his chief enjoyment. Few men possessed in a greater degree the happy art of making each of his guests contributors to the general entertainment; he sought to discover the subjects adapted to their respective tastes, and to select proper opportunities for drawing forth their sentiments on them; by this means even the most diffident characters were induced to display their

their powers of pleasing, and to benefit by an intercourse, without which the most fertile imagination or the most brilliant wit are of little use to the possessor. Replete with information, and possessing a natural fund of humour, which was corrected by good-breeding, as well as an aversion to wounding the most delicate ear, Mr. Neville's conversation was ever instructive and entertaining. It will not, therefore, appear surprising, that the house of a man so formed for society, possessing too a wife every way calculated for filling her place in it with satisfaction to himself and his friends, should in a confined circle be deemed the rallying point, around which assembled all that could partake of "the feast of reason and the flow of soul."

Of many children Mrs. Neville had borne in the West-Indies, one daughter alone survived, named Constantia.

To

To realize a property of amount sufficient to enable them to quit Barbadoes as soon as Montagu was of an age to succeed him in business, was the summit of Mr. Neville's ambition, and this he hoped might be attained when his beloved Constantia should stand in need of those instructions in female accomplishments, which in the West Indies are not easily to be procured.

The soil was so good, that it would have been wonderful if the precepts inculcated by her parents, had not found their way to the heart of Constantia. At the age of ten she was a most animating companion; and from having associated chiefly with grown people, she might be said to have emerged from the nursery into company, without having experienced the fears of childhood, or being committed to the care of any persons who were not immediately interested in her happiness,

ness, and who did not strive by every means in their power to fortify her mind, and to impress on it virtuous principles and amiable qualities.

From nature our young exotic had received many precious gifts. She had an excellent constitution, a sound understanding, quick sensibilities, and a grateful affectionate heart. Neither was her outward form devoid of attractions, the expression of her countenance was the true index of her feelings, her eyes were never sad and humid, unless from having offended her parents, or on the perusal of a tale of woe. Their general character was that of innocent mirth, nor did the dimples which played round her coral lips and ivory teeth, fail to confirm what the first glance indicated; and though born under the influence of a vertical sun, the roseate bloom on her cheek, and the fairness of her forehead,

head, would have induced a painter to draw her as the representative of the blooming Hebe.

Among the men of talents who partook of Mr. Neville's hospitality, there were few who failed to derive amusement from the playful mirth of his daughter, and who did not aim at becoming her preceptor. One among the number well qualified for the task, had experienced so much delight in watching the gradual expansion of her ideas, as voluntarily to give that regular daily attendance which created a bond of union between the parties, and stimulated the instructed to new exertions, in order that she might seem worthy of his kindness.

To the most prepossessing manly countenance and elegant person, this gentleman had added the gentlest deportment

portment to inferiors as well as equals. He had been eight months married to a daughter of one of the first families in the island, and held a place under government of responsibility and profit. One afternoon when Constantia was reading a poem to him, she thought him unusually grave, and that he hardly heeded what she uttered; her sympathy being awakened, she laid aside her book, and, with the most perfect innocence, seating herself on his knee, kissed his cheek. This awakened him from his reverie; starting up, he exclaimed, it must not be! the endearments of this child will drive me from my purpose. While he returned her affectionate salute, he said, "God bless you, my love, when we meet again;" the sentence hung unfinished on his lips, he tore himself away, leaving his pupil a prey to uneasiness, though unable to communicate

cate the cause. Her book was now no longer her companion, she again witnessed the involuntary start of her master, she felt his embrace, and his last words vibrated on her ear. In one hour from the uttering these words "when we meet again," was the noble-minded De Eresby a breathless corse. A duel with a man whose character should have prevented him from accepting his challenge, had been put a stop to by the interference of the magistrates a twelvemonth preceding this time. The dispute had originated from the one party praising the Americans for their resistance, and speaking in terms highly disrespectful of Great Britain, for her attempt to subjugate them. De Eresby had with more justice than prudence declared, that all men who thought so were poltroons, if they remained in a settlement receiving protection from a government, whose ministers they vilified, &c.

The animosity of Sutton was only smothered, while De Eresby had almost forgotten that any dispute had subsisted, he was happy in his connections, and respected wherever his name was known. On this very day, the term for which the parties were bound over to the peace expired, and most unfortunately they were of the same company at dinner. It was recollected afterwards, that as soon as the first glass went round, De Eresby and Sutton withdrew to the Piazza, where they set their watches. The former soon made a pretext for withdrawing, went home, cast his bullets, put his pistols in his pocket, sent for his wife from her father's, to deliver to her a key of his private papers, came to give Constantia her lesson, from thence proceeded to a coffee-house, where, without seconds or witnesses, both fired; when was laid low by the hands of a villain (for foul play was more than suspected)

pected) one of the most generous, most accomplished cavaliers of the age in which he lived.

This incident would not have been related, if I had not considered it of some importance towards developing the character of my heroine, shewing that at so early a period as in her eleventh year, she had known the joys and sorrows of more mature age.

" I was the last person to whom he spoke with tenderness in this world," said she to her mother, while her streaming eyes and hands were elevated towards Heaven in the attitude of prayer. Her father, whom the fatal intelligence had carried to the coffee-house, to ascertain if proper assistance had been given, now entered, and soothing the perturbed spirit of his daughter, by joining with his wife and her in prayer, she was soon made sensi-

ble that to grieve like those who have no hope is sinful; "we *shall* meet again," she would say, "where no Suttons can find admittance." So vain were her attempts to get the better of her abhorrence of this man, that she has frequently exposed herself to the extreme heat of the sun, rather than walk on the side of the street on which, at a great distance, she saw he was coming towards her; and once when he accidentally entered a private room, where she was sitting surrounded by company, it was with the utmost difficulty that she could be preserved from falling off her chair.

The arrival of her brother from England, drew the attention of Constantia from all other objects; yet did she cherish a lively remembrance of her amiable preceptor, whose instructions were also recollected, and proved of infinite use, having tended chiefly to the giving

giving her a clear articulation in reading, by making her comprehend the meaning of every sentence, so as to feel the force of what she uttered, as well as to enable her to give the heads of the subject of which the author had been treating. The pains taken to keep Constantia from the negroes (Mrs. Neville always having an English woman in her nursery) added to the society in which she was permitted to mix in her father's house, gave her at twelve years old a fluency of speech, and a correctness of language, which many of her seniors would have been proud to possess.

Mrs. Neville, it should be observed, had never wished to consider her residence in the West-Indies a permanent one. The hot weather, the musquitoes, and the negroes, were grievances which she could not have borne, but for the hope that the years of her pil-

grimage would soon be at an end, and that in her native country she would find a haven of rest. Blest with an uninterrupted state of health, and one of the *best*, as well as one of the *first* of men for her husband, her lot had been truly cast in pleasant places. Mr. Neville had frequently suffered from the diseases of the climate, and was fully as desirous of returning to Europe as his wife could be, though he never made this wish the subject of discourse; and when she dwelt with peculiar energy on the happiness she expected *at home*, he could not help gently reproving her, for not setting a proper value on the blessings then in her possession; hinting at the same time, the possibility that in England she might not find all things exactly concurring with her wishes, from persons of their moderate fortune moving in a sphere so different from that to which for so many years she had been accustomed. This

reason-

reasoning silenced without convincing, though Mrs. Neville had too much good sense to seek to influence her husband to quit the island, till his affairs were in a proper train, and he had sufficiently established his son in business, to venture on leaving it and himself to his own guidance.

The time at length arrived so long and so ardently expected; a passage was taken in a vessel commanded by a particular friend of the family; all was in readiness, when from some delay in settling an intricate piece of business, relative to an estate of which Mr. Neville was the acting executor, he was obliged to postpone his departure. This detention was nowise pleasing to Mrs. Neville, who feared from so many obstacles having arisen to retard her voyage, that it would never be undertaken, unless she consented to set out with only her daughter for her companion,

which she had resolved not to do. In two months, however, the family of Neville were at sea. Constantia, now in her thirteenth year, felt but little regret in quitting her native country. Accustomed to hear Great-Britain talked of as a *home* by all who frequented her father's house, she considered that she was now bound to a place to which she naturally belonged, and that her being born in the West Indies was purely accidental. From having been made the companion of grown people, she had few intimates of her own age; indeed she was at a loss how to amuse them, and never felt happier than after having paid a visit where there were girls; for she considered a task accomplished which in prospect had appeared to be difficult of performance. The parting from her brother caused her to shed a few tears; these, however, were easily dried up, as she doubted not that he would also soon *come home*, when they

they could participate in the pleasures with which she believed a residence in England must abound. The voyage was prosperous in every respect. The enquiring mind of Constantia had for some days sufficient employment in contemplating the wonders of the deep. If the setting of the glorious Luminary awakened rapture, what sensations of astonishment and delight pervaded her whole soul, in observing the effects of his rising apparently from the bosom of the waters! The elevation of thought, the expansion of mind, the fervour of gratitude, which the contemplation of the sublime works of the Creator give, were experienced in their full force by our young West Indian. Her transported father scarce knew how to check the exuberance of her imagination. He strove to direct her attention to the sacred truths of the gospel, and while she listened to his instructions with silent wonder and reverence, he experienced

the mingled emotions of pain and pleasure, such as can only be understood by parents, who, like Mr. Neville, are equally anxious for the eternal happiness and temporal prosperity of their offspring. Thus was instilled into the mind of Constantia, the knowledge of that wisdom which is above all price, along with that information respecting the objects discoverable in the azure vault above, and the inhabitants of the waters beneath, as tended to strengthen and confirm her opinion of her father's pre-eminence, and of her own happiness in being allowed to disclose to such a man, as to her dearest and most intimate friend, all the hopes and wishes which by turns occupied her heart or floated on her imagination. On the arrival of the party in England, Mrs. Neville found the extortions of the Custom-house officers less bearable than any of the grievances of Barbadoes. The intelligence communicated by the pilot respect-

respecting the fate of the vessel in which Mr. Neville had originally taken his passage, might serve as an awful lesson to those who repine at apparent evils, which not unfrequently prove to be real blessings. On the rocks of Scilly was she wrecked, when none, but those who could swim, saved their lives; need I add, every passenger on board perished. Their providential escape filled the breasts of the whole family with the liveliest gratitude to the Almighty, for his visible interference in their behalf: The impression made on Constantia by this event was indelible; often, when bending under the weight of reiterated disappointment, has she recollected this circumstance; at such seasons she had felt assured, by meditating on the incidents of her juvenile years, that she was marked out for a peculiarity of destiny, and that it was not for a vain purpose that she so,

soon acquired habits of reflection, and a proneness to trace effects to their causes.

In reading the Seasons of the immortal Thomson, Constantia has often involuntarily exclaimed, "And am I the favoured being who may indulge the expectation of contemplating the beauties of the landscapes, from whence these animating descriptions have been taken?" Vivid as was her imagination, reality conveyed pleasures as exquisite. Reader, if thou hast ever been pent up for weeks in a wooden prison, under the controul of a petty tyrant, and compelled to associate with men and women whose conduct awakened contempt, and hast landed on the western coast of England in the first week of May, thou mayst form some faint conception of the feelings of Constantia when under similar circumstances. The joy

that

that appeared beaming on every countenance, the verdant carpet on which she trod, the poles yet standing with their blooming honours thick upon them, the milk which she drank, the bread which she ate, all seemed to convey to her delighted heart sensations of gratitude for the blessings so lavishly bestowed. "I am in England, in a country famed for its greatness, for the valour of its sons, and above all, for its humanity and charity." Thus soliloquized Constantia; pure and innocent was her mind, ardent and sincere were her expressions; accustomed to deliver her sentiments with freedom to all with whom she associated, she did not at first discern the surprize of her auditors at her volubility. A few days residence in Bristol taught her moderation, and she discovered, to her infinite mortification, that the people who lived in the midst of such, to her, romantic scenery,

scenery, felt none of her enthusiasm; *some* had heard of Thomson's Seasons, others had read them *without* emotion, "and yet I am still in England!" Too true, Constantia, many and severe are the trials which await thee in thy residence in that country, to which thy hopes and wishes have so constantly pointed; dear delusions of the heart and imagination, which in youth convey more exquisite delight, than do the joys of fruition in more advanced age.

Who would tear the veil from the eye of inexperience; who would disclose the dangers that await us on our progress through life? To fortify the mind by proper examples from history, and real life; to purify the heart; to prevent the indulgence of corrupt inclinations; and lastly, to point to that bright reversion in the sky, for those who have fulfilled their duty on earth, is all

that

that the moralist and preceptor of youth should aim at. Transitory indeed are human joys, not so their sorrows. Let us therefore strive to prolong the remembrance of the former, by partaking of none which have not their basis in virtue, and for their end happiness.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Avant que desirer fortement une chose, il faut examiner, quel est le bonheur de celui qui la posséde.

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

IF the country of England equalled the expectations formed by our young traveller, the appearance of the capital fell infinitely short of them. When arrived at the house of Mr. Neville's correspondent, situated in one of the dark lanes of the city, the opening of the iron gates had a powerful effect. As they closed, she imagined herself about to enter one of the buildings in former times appropriated as a convent for the reception of men or women. The elegance and comfort which pervaded every apartment, soon convinced her of the contrary. Though she could not

not help wondering how light was obtained in the apartments during the dark months of November and December, of which she had heard so much, when in the middle of June, and at noonday, they were so *sombre*.

In a short time Mr. Neville and his family had taken up their residence in a commodious, though not spacious house, in Bloomsbury-square. Their establishment was liberal but plain, neither husband nor wife thinking it essential to their happiness that they should be announced to their neighbours as rich West Indians.

The youngest Miss Carleton had, previous to her sister Bellmour quitting England, married a clergyman somewhat advanced in life, whose living lying in the North, she had consequently removed thither; nor was it likely that Mrs. Neville and her sister would

would now enjoy each others society, an interchange of letters being the only mode of communication that the distance of their respective places of residence could admit of. Mr. Carleton, soon after his youngest daughter's marriage, paid the debt of nature; on which event his property was converted into cash, and divided into three equal portions, for the benefit of his daughters, to whom he had by will bequeathed it.

Mrs. Neville feeling a strong desire to visit her native county, and to point out its beauties to her daughter, in the end of August Mr. Neville accompanied them on an excursion to the spot where she drew her first breath. At the cottage where she resided after quitting Holland, they purposed to make their first enquiry; no traces of it however were left; no vestige remaining of the rustic dwelling, where an affectionate husband and faithful wife were

made

made happier by a re-union, than on the day of marriage. Ordering the postillion to drive to the inn in the village, there did our travellers learn the cause which had produced these alterations. A wealthy foreign merchant had become the possessor of several estates in the neighbourhood, and having enlarged a house belonging to one of his purchases, till it almost merited the title of a palace, he had discovered, that from some of his windows this cottage intercepted the view of the village church; he therefore soon put the inhabitants to the rout, and razed the building to the ground. On enquiring who lived in Mr. Carleton's house, his daughter was not a little hurt at being told that it stood empty, the *great man* having thrown the ground into his park, did not choose to let the house, as the tenant's family might infringe upon his privacy; it was, consequently, from being shut up, going to decay.

How

How often has the exile from his native home, who pants for a glimpse of the rivulet whose gurgling current has spoken peace to his tortured soul; for the tree whose spreading branches has sheltered him from the noon-day sun; for numberless inanimate objects which have lived in his remembrance, and are more precious in his sight than the splendid scenery of Italy, or the sublime views of Switzerland, been disappointed in such his ardent expectations; so upon the present occasion has Mrs. Neville. Persons residing on one spot, are not sensible of the changes which take place around them, neither are their pleasures so exquisite, nor their sensations of pain so poignant. Happy is that man, who, on viewing the ravages of time, which long absence presses so forcibly on his observation, can look inwards, and say, though this outward form is also perishing, yet is the immortal part gaining new strength;

every

every day am I more the conqueror than I was the last, more convinced of the goodness of God to his creatures, more sensible of what is due from them in return for the inestimable benefits they are daily receiving. If uninterrupted prosperity has a tendency to check these emanations of the divinity from within; if the possession of wealth leads us to consider all who are unsuccessful candidates for fame or fortune as weak and imprudent; who would exchange moderate competency with humble content, for the distinctions of power and riches, if there is so great a chance of their being accompanied by arrogant superiority?

The equipage of Mr. Darlington stopping at the door of the Red Lion, to water the horses, mine host, ever officious to oblige his customers, ventured to inform the master, who was in the

the carriage, that there were some people from foreign parts in his house, who had a great desire to walk in his park, to view his improvements, and he believed would also be much obliged if he would grant them permission to go through the house formerly occupied by Mr. Carleton. Though this request was made without the knowledge of the travellers, they were not the less indebted to the friendly zeal which prompted it, nor were they so churlish as to omit expressing their thanks to Landlord Dobson, for his attention to their accommodation. To depict the feelings of Mrs. Neville, on visiting the scene of her youthful joys and sorrows, would only be to recapitulate what has already been said in a preceding page. The appearance of the lord of the domain himself, who had by this time learnt that it was a daughter of Mr. Carleton, that was viewing his now

deserted

deserted habitation, obliged the groupe to rouze themselves, in order to shew that they were not deficient in politeness, or unworthy of the attention which as strangers they had received. In the person of Mr. Darlington, Mr. and Mrs. Neville instantly recognized one of the clerks of the house of Hayman at Hamburgh, who they were not a little surprized to see in so consequential a garb. Too certain that his former insignificance was well recollected, Mr. Darlington immediately relaxed from his dignity, affected to be superlatively happy at the rencontre with his old friends; congratulated them on the beauty of their daughter, and, finally, insisted on their accompanying him to Darlington Hall, in order that he might introduce them to his wife and daughter, who would be proud to shew its beauties, as well as to assist him in prevailing on the party to pass some time under his roof.

To

To describe the lofty entrance, the spacious saloons, elegant drawing-rooms, superb pictures, burnished pier glasses, &c. with which the mansion, called Darlington Hall, abounded, would be superfluous. Suffice it to say, that all was truly elegant, and reflected no small degree of credit on the taste of Mrs. Darlington, under whose direction it had been completed. This lady received her guests with a degree of ease and general politeness, which at once indicated the polish of the higher circles. Miss Darlington would fain have welcomed Constantia, had she been able to express herself in the presence of her seniors. The preceding midsummer vacation had loosened her from the trammels of one of the high-finishing schools of the metropolis; and the art of conversation not being one of the branches of education taught there, she had no powers of speech, save when released from the restraints of good-

breeding;

breeding; alone with companions of her own age, her volubility was disgusting, except to those who laboured under similar disadvantages.

The pressing invitation to pass a few days at Darlington Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Neville had not resolution to withstand, though their usual discernment shewed them, that no permanent intimacy could subsist between people whose spheres of life were not more opposite, than were their sentiments and modes of thinking and acting.

Happy were our worthy couple to hear that Mr. Charles Hayman's success in Russia had been proportioned to his deserts, and that he was so much respected, that he had been honoured with peculiar marks of distinction from the Empress herself. To their enquiry respecting the widow of Mr. Hayman, they were told, that on the suppression

of religious houses in Brabant, by the Emperor Joseph, she had retired to one of the Ursuline convents in France, there to inflict on herself the most severe penance, for having entrusted her son to the care of strangers, in preference to that of the family of his father. It appeared that the persons who promised to bring him up as their own child, had met with misfortunes in England, which induced them to embark as adventurers for North America. Of their arrival at New York positive accounts had been received, and one order afterwards for the sum which Mrs. Hayman allowed them half yearly, and which was always paid in advance for the ensuing six months. No subsequent application being made, the merchant, through whose hands the money was paid, wrote to respectable persons resident in that city, who made the necessary enquiries, and returned for answer, that a family of that name and description,

tion,

tion, had gone up to form a settlement in the interior part of the colony, where a pestilential fever had soon after raged, which swept away whole families, and that no farther account of them could be procured; it appeared, however, too certain, that the child must have shared the same fate with its unfortunate protectors.

These communications served to awaken the most painful, as well as the most pleasing, emotions. Mr. Darlington believing that the curiosity of his guests was sufficiently awakened to know the history of his advancement, condescended to relate to Mr. Neville, in private, that on his quitting the employ of Hayman and Co. he had been engaged by a great German house, the head of which soon after dying, and his services being found important, the widow cast her eye upon him as a proper man to succeed her husband; and

the hook being strongly baited with gold, he had, in consideration of *value received*, consented to wed a lady something more than twenty years his senior, of which incumbrance he was freed by death, in less than five years afterwards, when, as soon as decency would permit, he came to England, that he might in his second voyage to matrimony have a companion of his own choice. He then married his present lady, who was both nobly born and highly bred, and who, though she cheerfully accompanied him to Hamburgh, after she had astonished his acquaintances there, by a display of her talents and superior elegance, never suffered him to rest till he agreed to remove to England, in order that she might have a greater scope for shewing her taste, and mortifying some of the ancient families with which she was connected, by the brilliancy of her equipage, splendor of her habitations, and magnificence of her entertainments.

"I have

" I have wealth enough," continued Mr. Darlington, " to admit of indulging Mrs. Darlington in her taste for shew; for what with shares of the loan, and contracts from government, my fortune is always bettering itself. Beside my daughter, whom you have seen, I have two boys younger than her, who are at school at Harrow; for that is one of my wife's peculiarities, not to have any of her children educated by a tutor at home."

Mr. Darlington having taken pretty copious draughts of claret, had got into a vein of talking not usual with him. Finding little interruption from his companion, he began to be familiar, " Ah, friend Robert," said he, (clapping him on the shoulder) " if Master Hayman of Hamburgh had known how to manage his matters as well as you and I do, he might have been sound as a roach at this moment." Mr. Neville felt nowise elated

at being classed with the man that had bartered liberty and happiness for gold, and afterwards bestowed it on a woman who considered him merely as a dead weight thrown into the scale, who received no gratification from exercising the functions of a parent, from a fear that the presence of her children would destroy her pretensions to universal admiration, at which she aimed; of course he had no desire to interrupt the harangue, by stating his own moderate circumstances, and unambitious designs. Mr. Darlington proceeded, "Charles was more the man of business than Marmaduke, but neither of them were deep; no, they wanted it here," putting his hand on his forehead." "Men of abilities, who keep the main chance in view, will always succeed in what they undertake; don't you think so?" This direct appeal could not be parried. "Generally speaking, your remark is just, replied Mr. Neville; but our

our ladies will think we have deserted them; so let us to our chambers, and good night to you." The subject could have been pursued, by Mr. Neville's asking Mr. Darlington, if he had forgotten what the wisest of men so long ago declared;—"That the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but that time and chance happen to all men." From his own observation and experience, he could have authenticated the truth of this saying of Solomon, arrogating no merit to himself, from having by his own industry become possessed of affluence equal to his wishes, and exceeding his expectations, though not amounting to a much larger sum than was allotted by Mr. Darlington as a portion for his daughter.

The recapitulation of what past during this *tete-à-tete*, afforded no small diversion to Mrs. Neville, who had, it seems,

in the early part of their acquaintance, formed no very exalted opinion of the understanding of Mr. Darlington, nor had the pomp and grandeur with which he was at present surrounded, served to obscure her judgment so far, as to make her believe that it was obtained by his superiority in any respect, save that of worldly wisdom, otherwise a servile compliance with the ruling passions of those whose interest or purse he wished to have under his command.

The next day Mr. Darlington made it still more his business to enquire into the circumstances and views of Mr. Neville, professing himself deeply interested in the welfare of his family; offering his advice, and the exertion of his interest in whatever line of business he proposed to engage. The votary of Plutus was perfectly aware of the independence of mind of the man to whom he was thus officiously tendering his

his services. The appearance of the whole party was such, as to entitle them to the respect of those who only judge from the exterior. Had it been otherwise, had Mr. Neville returned to England a proscribed, a banished man, who having from principle relinquished the fruits of his industry, rather than swerve from his allegiance to his sovereign, was, consequently, in want of powerful friends to establish him in a country where the most sterling abilities may not preserve the possessor from poverty, if he be not well recommended, or have the merit of being born in another kingdom, which claim to patronage must be confirmed by a foreign accent; under such circumstances, I say, how difficult might it not have been for the upright merchant to gain admittance to the hall of audience of his sometime fellow-clerk, and the now overbearing purse-proud contractor? With how much more address would

the latter have then evaded the discussion of all subjects, which might lead to a disclosure of the state of his former companion's finances, then was now discoverable in his anxiety to learn their actual extent. The natural openness of Mr. Neville's character, obliged him to give more pointed answers to these questions than was at all necessary; his punctuality to his correspondents, while an inhabitant of Barbadoes, was a passport to his admission on the 'Change of London in a commercial character; his plans had, therefore, been ably sketched, and fully digested, previous to his visit to Nettlebury. The interval till the arrival of the autumn fleet, he had devoted to pleasurable excursions, to amuse his wife, and shew his daughter a little of the beauty of the country of England, of which she appeared so enthusiastically fond. This young lady had not found her way to the good graces of Mrs. Darlington,

who

who felt her dignity not a little lowered from the familiarity with which she was addressed by her. The degree of self-possession, so conspicuous in the actions of Constantia, when contrasted with the hoyden bashfulness of Miss Darlington, our high-bred dame knew not how to estimate. Instead of expressing wonder at the magnificent decorations which were displayed in their full lustre, in order to dazzle the sight, and excite the envy of the strangers, Constantia remarked to her mother, that the spaciousness of the rooms, and the elegance of the hangings, came very near, in her idea, to the descriptions of the sumptuous dwellings of the Eastern Monarch, of which she had read in the Arabian Nights Entertainments. This innocent remark was never forgiven by the mistress of the mansion, as she fancied there was some satire intended to be conveyed by it; to punish the fair offender, Mrs. Darlington that

evening produced her cabinet of jewels, announcing, as she held each costly trinket up to view, what sum it was valued at, and acquainting Miss Neville, that however profusely writers of Eastern tales might adorn their heroines with diamonds and pearls, in England they were seldom to be seen in any quantity, except in the drawing-room of St. James's Palace, decorating the nobility, or on great occasions.

After dismissing the young ladies to their apartments, Mrs. Darlington took her turn of interrogating, by asking Mrs. Neville how she meant to dispose of her daughter during the next winter, "You cannot surely think of introducing her at so early an age, and without her having had any opportunity of acquiring the necessary polish, which can only be obtained by living under the same roof with young people of rank and family."

"I can-

"I cannot be certain that my plan is not liable to objections," replied Mrs. Neville, "but I own I shall not consent to my daughter's being separated from me. Under my own inspection, she may have the advantages which London affords, of the best masters in every branch of education; whatever accomplishment she appears to have any taste for, Mr. Neville and myself will find a pleasure in affording her the means of acquiring a scientific knowledge of. To aim at controuling her inclinations on this point, would be impolitic in the extreme, for she is fully sensible of the value of time, and the importance of cultivating her talents, nor do we discover any propensities that require correction, or at least that will not very speedily yield to the acuteness of her own observations.

"Were she to be placed among a number of young people, who had associated

sociated only with girls like themselves, Constantia would become supercilious and over-bearing, from finding her general knowledge of books, and a variety of other things, so much more extensive than theirs. She could not comprehend that her superiority arises from our making her so much our companion, nor our reasons for doing so, namely, the fear of contamination from the negroes, whose immoral discourse and corrupted dialect, if she had often heard it, unrestrained by our presence, might have had the most pernicious effects." Mrs. D. was too well bred a woman to pursue a subject which she saw would displease her guest; she pitied the infatuation of the mother, and secretly wished that the party would adhere to their resolution of leaving Darlington Hall the following day.

Mr. Darlington had sufficiently sounded Mr. Neville, to ascertain that he had

had a right to two votes, as a proprietor of East India stock, and thought it highly probable that before the annual election of directors in April, he might also be able to influence others to vote on the same side on which he was engaged. This situation being aspired to by Mr. Darlington, he omitted no opportunity of strengthening his interest; consequently his invitations to Portland Place were very emphatically delivered, including in them even the playful Constantia, whose ruddy health and activity of mind and body, had inspired disgust rather than approbation in our mushroom man of consequence, and his tasteful dame. Proper acknowledgments paid, and cards of address exchanged, our travellers bent their course from the abode of pride and ostentation, to the more humble dwelling of a relation of Mrs. Neville, whose chief claim to distinction did not originate

ginate in the number of his flocks and herds, or in any outward trappings.

On the road thither Mr. Neville observed his daughter to be unusually thoughtful. She was silent, though the prospects which met her eye, were not only luxuriant, but diversified to a degree that could not fail of exciting her admiration. "Are you sorry at parting from your new friend, my dear," said Mr. Neville, "that you are so grave this morning? Tell me, what were you thinking of, that so completely engrossed your attention?" "Most willingly sir; I have been thinking how it happened that you, my mother, and many others, who noticed me in Barbadoes, did not tell me the difficulties I should have to encounter when I came to England; for I find I am called a rude untaught savage, that I neither know how to come in or go out of a room,

room, and unless I am taken away from you and my mother for a year or two, that I shall grow up without a chance of knowing any thing. Now I am very sensible of my own deficiencies, yet I am sure, except it be in music and dancing, I think Miss Darlington must have gained very little by being at school. Though she was taught geography for two years, she asked me such questions about the West-Indies, that I should hardly have believed she knew the sun rose in the east and set in the west. Then as to reading, she says she never took pleasure in perusing any book that she did not procure by stealth. She had been used to deceive her governess and teachers, and she delighted in practising the same arts on her father and mother. In the room where there were so many fine prints, I was particularly pleased with one representing the parting of Hector and Andromache; after contemplating it for some time, I

asked

asked her if she did not think Achilles had tarnished all his laurels, by his unmanly treatment of the remains of his vanquished foe? She stared at me, as if I had been speaking in an unknown tongue, and to my utter astonishment, had never heard of the fall of Ilium, or the ten years' siege which it sustained. Not a step farther was she in the history of her own country, and what was infinitely more surprising, she appeared as little acquainted with either the old or new testament writers. Now if it be really settled that I am to go to school, I hope my dear Mamma has not promised Mrs. Darlington to send me to —— Square; I am sure I am so prejudiced by the reports of Amelia, that I fear I should not behave there as I ought to do; and yet her communications were made with a view of reconciling me to what she said was determined upon."

It

It is scarcely necessary to state, that the communications of the ingenuous Constantia, were received by her parents with all the kindness she could desire, and that they encouraged her to continue to disclose to them the observations she should make on what appeared new and strange, as others might bewilder her by their answers, not having sufficient consideration for her youth and inexperience; for though but just turned of thirteen, Miss Neville's height and appearance induced all who beheld her to conclude, that she was in her seventeenth year. From the proofs given of the cultivation of her mind, and her powers of reflection, it will not be presumed that her conversation indicated the *untaught savage*, an appellation which none would have bestowed on her, *save and except* Mrs. Darlington herself, nor would she have gone so far, if she had not been mortified

fied beyond expression at discerning the advantages which the artless unfashioned West-Indian possessed over her daughter, the accomplished elegant Miss Darlington.

CHAP

CHAP. VI.

When a daughter is persuaded that a father talks only reason to her, and solely from tenderness, she hearkens to him, and his advice produces the best effects.

GANGANELLI'S LETTERS.

THE assurances of her parents restored to Constantia all her sprightly vivacity. She became again the laughter-loving goddess, who sought to draw amusement from every object, yet who had a tear for the miserable, and a hand ever ready to assist the weak and feeble, without considering if the objects requiring aid were clothed in rags or in purple. Her mind, always active, and recurring frequently to the ideas she had formed of the wealth and charity of the English nation, from the innumerable

numerable institutions for the reception of the poor, the sick, and the blind, with a long train of &c. of which she had read and heard, she could not comprehend why the streets of the capital and the roads to and from it, were so infested with mendicants. Her questions on this, and many other subjects, were often distressing to her father. He wished not to hold up to her view the hardened profligacy of those who prefer the life of a common beggar to the restraints imposed by industrious habits, which must be adopted by those who gain their living by a particular calling; still less did he desire to display the depravity of another class, who in too many instances have the charge of collecting the poor rates, and who lavish away at parish-feasts, and upon unnecessary and expensive law-suits, sums that might support thousands of their poorer neighbours. Truly may it be said that such characters

ters fatten on the spoils of the indigent; and the man who with unceasing profusion will give orders for a dinner, for which he is not to pay, will, perhaps, deny his family the most trifling indulgence, doing penance when at home, lest if he were there luxurious, all must be equally partakers, not unfrequently too, finding a cessation from high living necessary, in order to enable him to attend the next public dinner without fear of endangering his health.

The arrival of the party at Mr. Selwyn's, drew the worthy owner from his garden to welcome his old friends. Constantia sprung out of the chaise into his arms, while her heart fluttered as if embracing a second father. "It is Robert Neville's face," was all that the good man could utter, while his eye rested on the altered countenances of the objects of early attachment, from whom he had been separated for more than

than twenty years. The meeting was painfully affecting; during that interval what had not each party endured! Mr. Selwyn had buried the wife of his youth, who had left him one son a pledge of mutual affection; he had married a second time from prudential motives; his choice, though apparently judicious, had not, however, tended to ensure domestic happiness: the son, on various pretexts, was kept at a distance from his father's house, and though designed for a liberal profession, was not allowed the advantages of education, which might have enabled him to pursue it as became a gentleman and a scholar. The consciousness of his own want of resolution on a point of such importance made Mr. Selwyn shrink from the enquiries which he was certain would soon be made. This caused an embarrassment in his manner, while he introduced his wife, a stout florid looking woman of forty-five, a native of Milford Haven,

who

who looked as if she knew how to fill her own place in society, and sometimes found her husband's best suited her inclinations. She professed to be vastly happy to see the travellers. Persons of less penetration than Mr. and Mrs. Neville, would not have discovered, that in the fear of not doing enough to disguise her real disposition, she most effectually displayed it. Constantia was so much attracted towards the master of the house, by the placidity and benevolence which beamed in every feature of his really fine countenance, that she had little leisure for examining that of her hostess, whose eager assiduities towards the father and mother, did not fail to make the desired impression on the daughter. Here then she was under no restraint; in retiring to rest, when she wished her mother good night, she omitted not to express the state of her feelings, and how truly she was gratified in being an in-

mate of a family, the head of which inspired, even at first sight, her esteem and regard. How opposite were the sentiments excited by the appearance and conversation of Mr. Darlington, she would have added, had not Mrs. Neville reminded her of the late hour, and that in the morning the subject could be pursued to more advantage.

At breakfast the party became more familiar. Mr. Neville now requested to know what young Selwyn was doing in Wales (for there it had been the preceding evening said he was, without naming his occupation) adding, "I thought from your letters, you meant that he should study medicine; but I suppose the young man's inclination did not lead to the profession." An involuntary blush crimsoned the face of Mr. Selwyn, while he declared that his son was bound apprentice to an apothecary at Haverfordwest, as the surest means of

acquiring

acquiring the requisite knowledge; for he had no intention that he should take a degree, but wished simply to make him a good surgeon and apothecary, this being the summit of his ambition. He hurried on to observe, that being boarded in the family, who were worthy people, and very near relations of Mrs. Selwyn, he was certain of his morals being attended to, while diligence and application to business were also strongly enforced both by precept and example. Mrs. Selwyn kept silence, while Mr. and Mrs. Neville found it difficult to restrain their indignation at discovering the complete thraldom in which she kept both father and son. But for Constantia, a dead silence would have ensued. She recollected having viewed the coast of Wales as she came up the Bristol channel, she praised what she had seen, and she expressed an earnest desire to penetrate farther, to judge for herself whether the beautiful

description of its romantic hills and fertile vales were just. This well-timed eulogium on her native country, brought smiles on the countenance of Mrs. Selwyn, who immediately offered to take her to visit her relations the following summer, provided she could obtain the permission of her parents. This Constantia knew was not to be solicited at present. "Supposing that it was accorded," said she, turning to Mr. Selwyn, "will you be of our party, sir?" "Surely, my dear, if I had no other inducement, I should be happy to attend you; I think a less pleasant excursion would afford entertainment, were you my travelling companion." "Take care you do not spoil my child," says Mrs. Neville; but her admonition did not reach the ears of either of the speakers. Constantia continuing to address Mr. Selwyn, "I dont know how it is, but I can talk to you just as I do to my father; pray check me whenever you think me

troublesome; for I have been told, that in this country girls, like me, are never allowed to speak."

"If they all spoke as you do, my dear little friend," said Mr. Selwyn, "we should not find it necessary to make such restrictions. I wish, Robert, you had a pair of daughters, that I might steal this chatterbox from you; I should fancy my youth renewed in listening to her artless effusions."

Constantia now left the group to take a nearer survey of some pictures that hung over the chimney-piece, when looking stedfastly at the profile of a gentleman, simply an etching in black, she asked permission to take it down, which being granted, after surveying it some time at the window, "Certainly it is he," says she, "that it resembles; pray, Mamma," holding it up to her view, "is not that very like Dr. Lewis?"

 "What,

" What, do you know Tom Lewis? Is he living?" cried Mr. Selwyn, " it is his picture, we thought him dead."

" He was almost the last person we saw in Bridge Town," replied Constantia. " If you can give assurance of his health and safety, his family and friends will be ready to devour you with kindness. He is a distant relation of my wife, and seven years ago he left Wales, where he was settled in his profession, for love of a charming girl, whose friends refused to let them marry; nor have they, during that time, received any intelligence of or from him."

That Dr. Lewis was much esteemed as a man of letters and distinguished worth, as well as in his medical character, in the Island of Grenada. Mr. Neville had received the most undoubted information; he had come to Barbadoes with the son of the governor of the

the island, in order to procure a passage to Rhode Island, to which place he had advised the removal of the young man, whose constitution wanted the bracing of a colder climate. When the Doctor had settled him under proper protection, he was to return to his own place of residence, for which important service to the father he would be most amply rewarded. Both the gentlemen had partaken of Mr. Neville's hospitality during their stay in Bridge Town, and in spite of the gloom with which it was evident the worthy physician was contending, he had distinguished Constantia; and she in return, paid him the most winning attentions, being more attracted by the marked physiognomy of the disappointed lover, who was nearer forty than thirty, than by the handsome countenance of his companion, the highly polished and interesting Mr. Lindegreen. That she should be the means of conveying good tidings to

any person, afforded sincere pleasure to the warm heart of Constantia, who only regretted, that the period named for her tour to the principality, was not near at hand; most ardently desiring to see the lady whose good qualities had been so forcibly acknowledged by Dr. Lewis, and who, she was told, had proved herself to be worthy of his affection, by suffering no other pretender to her favour, to entertain hopes that she would swerve from her engagements to him.

This little incident drew Mrs. Selwyn to the family of Neville, more than knowledge of their intrinsic worth could have done. With the utmost alacrity she sat down to write what she had heard, not a little elated at having such authentic intelligence to communicate respecting the actual situation of her cousin, whose prospects in life she failed not to delineate in the most glowing colours, while she expatiated on the

reputation

reputation his skill had acquired him from strangers, in the hope of mortifying the connections of his mistress, who from having opposed the marriage, had indirectly insinuated his inferiority to themselves.

A few days passed happily away, when Mr. Neville believing he had acquired some ascendancy on the mind of Mrs. Selwyn, ventured one day after dinner, to suggest the propriety of young Selwyn passing the ensuing winter in the capital, that he might *walk the hospitals*, and attend medical lectures; offering, at the same time, to take him under his own immediate guidance and protection. This direct attack on her authority, likely to end in the draining of her husband's purse, did not reach the ears of Mrs. Selwyn, without awakening resentment against the person by whom it was made. Not daring, however, to enter the lists while surrounded

by foes, she prudently declined the contest, leaving her husband to answer for himself; fully confident that her influence could overset any plan which militated against her views for settling young Selwyn, whom she had determined should marry a favourite niece of her's, (daughter of the man to whom he was bound apprentice) or he should inherit very little of his father's property. Mr. Selwyn most willingly gave way to paternal feelings, thanking his old friend, in the strongest terms, for his kindness; while he assured him his boy should soon be sent to London, to be placed under his fatherly care, trusting that when there, he would strive to prove himself worthy of his friendship and regard. Who could have believed that a man of Mr. Selwyn's principles and just manner of thinking, should need admonition on the point most essential to his own happiness, in which also was interwoven the performance

of

of one of the first positive duties,—that of protection and countenance of our offspring? Still more strange will it appear, that when the time approached for summoning his son from the pestle and mortar, to prosecute his studies, this *delectable* step-mother of the young man persuaded his father, that to draw him from his present connections would be to deprive him of the chance of succeeding his uncle in business, a situation more eligible than any which he could obtain elsewhere; while he could not summon the resolution to say, that the very steps he was about to take for his son's improvement, would better fit him for acting as a surgeon, either in Haverfordwest, or any other place; though probably his mixing in other circles might lead him to think less of the beauty and accomplishments of Cousin Dorothy. Such are the inconsistencies discoverable in the conduct of persons of the strictest probity and

worth; and painful to the feelings is it to be obliged to confess, that the Mrs. Selwyns have a degree of respect and deference paid to them by their husbands, which wives, who would only influence by kindness and affection, and whose aim is the happiness of those around them, are seldom in the habit of receiving. They possess, notwithstanding, one great and singular advantage, of which no one can bereave them, the approbation of their own hearts, with its usual concomitant, the love of their children and dependents. Alas! without the former, of what value are the choicest blessings of this life? To digress no more, let me convey the family of Neville safely back to Bloomsbury Square, where our young friend found comforts superior to those which pervaded the costly dome called Darlington Hall, or the abode of the notable housewife whom she had lately left; her anxiety to have all in order, sometimes making her

her appear as if she had just left the kitchen to take her place at the head of her table.

Having now settled the young West Indian for some years, as an inhabitant of the great city, I have, possibly, a very good opportunity of striving to make my peace with those readers who have hitherto condemned me for giving her sentiments and habits of reflection altogether inconsistent with her time of life. At the opening of the present chapter, many have, doubtless, exclaimed, how could a girl of thirteen or fourteen trouble herself about the use to which charitable institutions are put, and talk of the beggars on the road, except to give them halfpence, to be rid of their importunity? Those who have been bred and born with objects of so wretched an appearance constantly in view, I am persuaded, would content themselves with relieving present necessity,

cessity, passing quickly on to the contemplation of more agreeable subjects, rather than tracing the causes which would naturally give birth to such misery. But where poverty is scarcely known, and a white person reduced to a state of servitude is a phenomenon, the squalid wretchedness which daily presents itself to the eyes of Americans or West Indians on their arrival in Europe, must have a powerful effect. A youthful native of an English settlement, who reads a London newspaper, conceives, that in the mother country every person is prosperous and healthy. Those around them, whose constitutions are impaired by a residence in sultry climes, go to it in quest of the most invaluable of blessings; this strengthens the opinion already imbibed. To associate with those worthy characters, that are on every occasion ready to contribute to the support of the widow and orphan, a list of whose names so often grace a

column of the first page of the *Chronicle*, or other newspaper, appears to the juvenile reader, one of the advantages attendant on a residence in England. A young person, brought up as Constantia Neville was, under the immediate guidance of sensible well-educated parents, who taught her to consider them as her best and most intimate friends, must think and feel very differently from one who might be much her senior, and possibly nowise inferior in capacity, that had no better mode of acquiring knowledge, than a repetition of lessons, which are forgotten with the same facility that they are learned, unless by conversation on the subjects of which they treat, the mind receives a second impression. It has been seen, that at a very early period of Constantia's life, she had the good fortune to conciliate the regard and affection of a man of superior abilities, who voluntarily took upon himself the office of her

her preceptor; her progress must have been such as to afford him pleasure, or he would soon have been disgusted with the employment. In a periodical publication I recollect this expression, that a heroine of a novel was "*Smitten with a love of teaching*," when, according to my idea, she was only acting a laudable part. Be that as it may, we have never heard of a Lord of the creation being *smitten* in like manner, and as Mr. De Eresby had paid the debt of nature before the passage alluded to appeared in print, it is not to be presumed, that he was desirous of emulating the example of the lady in question, "by teaching the young idea how to shoot," and "pouring instruction into the willing mind." The death of this gentleman gave to the heart of his pupil the first sensation of poignant sorrow it had ever experienced, his memory was most dear to her; carefully did she aim at preserving in her own, the substance

of

of his invaluable lessons, while the sense of the obligations he had conferred, "grew with her growth, and strengthened with her strength." Add to all these peculiar advantages possessed by our fair exotic, the well known fact, that in warm climates both mind and body sooner arrive at maturity than in cold ones; and it will not be imagined that the writer has forgotten the excellent counsel she lately received *, "to adhere to the line she has chosen, and not to sacrifice truth, simplicity, nature, and sterling worth of character, for the unnatural eccentricities and vicious absurdities of," &c. &c. That I may never again trespass on the patience of the public, by figuring in the character of an egotist, so inconsistent with that of an author, I now beg leave to say, that the incidents recorded in this narrative, which may appear nearest a-kin to the marvellous, are either detailed from per-

* See Anti-Jacobin Review of August, 1799.

sonal

sonal observation, or the reports of friends, whose testimony, if brought forward, would be considered unquestionable.

* * * * * *

Six years rolled away without any circumstance arising worthy of notice in the family of Neville. A kind of formal visit twice in a winter took place between the female part of it and the Darlingtons, at the particular desire of Mr. Darlington, who wishing to strengthen his city interest, sent frequent invitations to Mr. Neville, to sumptuous dinners at Portland Place, some of which were accepted; nor did the *great man* refuse to make one at Mr. Neville's table, though when there, he felt his consequence not a little lowered, no guest having any deference paid to his rank in life, but simply, that involuntary submission which pre-eminent abilities, and the consciousness of worth, always receives from the judicious.

Amelia Darlington was of too little consequence in the eyes of her parents, to induce them to bestow that attention upon her which might have corrected the propensity to deceive, formerly spoken of as a prominent feature of her character. Had she been celebrated for personal charms and showy accomplishments, Mrs. Darlington would have been proud of her daughter, and taken no small pains to get her fashionably settled in life. As matters stood, poor Amelia was a serious incumbrance, and all the affection which the modish mother could spare from herself, was lavished on her eldest son, a youth in every sense of the word worthy of being a *hero* of a *public school*. The death of the youngest son soon after the travellers were introduced at Darlington Hall, enhanced the value of Master Henry. The hopes of the family rested on his preservation, a baronetcy having already been obtained, with the promise of an English

English barony on the first creation; the services of the possessor being important in a certain quarter, they were easily repaid by trifling distinctions, which cost so little to the bestower, and were so truly acceptable to the receiver.

The daughter of Sir Charles Darlington was soon singled out as an object worthy the attention of needy young men of family, who by a matrimonial connection hoped to recruit their finances, and be in the way of getting into Parliament free of expence; doubtless determining to vote, when seated, exactly as their sapient father-in-law should direct. Where neither party were difficult to please; a marriage of this kind was soon brought to bear. Amelia fancied herself *in love*, and the admirer who found it to be his interest to persuade his mistress that he could not live without her, assisted in carrying on the

decep-

deception. Sir Charles gave ten thousand pounds down, with a promise of as much more at his death; settling on his daughter, and her children, not only her present fortune, but whatever she might inherit from him at a future period.

Mr. Rochford, that he might the more successfully pay his court to Sir Charles, took a house in the neighbourhood of Portland Place, to which his bride removed, feeling not a sentiment of regret at quitting the stately abode of her parents. To be at liberty to make her own engagements, to order her carriage when and to what place she pleased, with other indulgences peculiar to the married state, was all she thought of in entering her own house. Having been formerly restricted by her mother from paying attention to Miss Neville, so desirous was she of acting in opposition to her commands, that almost

most the first thing she proposed doing after her marriage, was to pay a morning visit to Bloomsbury Square, meaning by thus laying aside etiquette, to shew her earnest wish to be on the most intimate footing with Miss Neville. During the time that had elapsed from the commencement of their acquaintance, Constantia had become less fastidious than we have formerly found her; accustomed to mix in general society, her observations on the mode in which that is usually conducted, served to convince her, that superior intellectual endowments were in no degree necessary for ensuring a welcome reception in the *beau monde*. At home her rational faculties were exercised, because the company who frequented her father's table were men of letters, and subjects were frequently discussed in her presence, in which she mentally bore a part, though diffidence of her own powers, added to a fear of being censured

censured for pretending to understand what was considered above her comprehension, kept her silent. The more she became acquainted with other young women, the less conspicuous did she think the defects of Amelia Darlington. However lenient Miss Neville might be to the faults of her neighbour, she was a rigid censor of her own; often when she called to mind how deeply she had made Amelia feel her inferiority of attainments, most sensibly did she regret that no opportunity had presented itself for erasing the unfavourable impression, which such a display of knowledge had doubtless made. This sentiment, though not communicated by words, gave an expression to Miss Neville's manner, when in company with Miss Darlington, that tended to excite affection. The latter readily overlooked what, if brought forward, would have lowered her consequence, and at last began to think that Miss Neville

Neville was not so clever as she at first thought her, while of her own progress to perfection, she was fully convinced, Thus in idea brought to the same level in point of understanding, Mrs. Rochford knew not where to select a companion so much adapted to her taste; her motive, therefore, for this early visit, was immediately disclosed to Mrs. Neville, whose permission for her daughter's passing as much time as possible in Devonshire Place, was most warmly solicited. Cautious of making any promise without consultation with her husband, Mrs. Neville, notwithstanding received the bride as if she were already the friend of her daughter, who, on the other hand, was most sincere in her congratulations on the late event. The young ladies parted mutually pleased with each other, Amelia not having so far forgotten her boarding-school finesse, as to omit assuming the kind of manners which she believed would be most

most acceptable in Bloomsbury-square. Mr. Neville was too desirous of gratifying the wishes of his family to deny his sanction to the proposed intercourse, relying implicitly on his daughter's judgment, he feared not to trust to her prudence for retreating, should she discern its continuance to be improper or inconsistent.

CHAP. VII.

Modest doubt is call'd the beacon of the wise; the tent that searches to the bottom.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE success which had hitherto attended Mr. Neville's commercial concerns now seemed to forsake him. A failure of the accustomed remittances from Montagu, to account for which reasons of sufficient validity in the eyes of his father were not assigned, awakened in both parents suspicions of imprudence and extravagance on his part, which the subsequent events proved to be too well founded.

Unwilling to throw any gloom on the natural vivacity of their daughter, in her presence they strove to preserve their

their usual cheerfulness, nor were they at all displeased that the marriage of Mrs. Rochford, led her to partake of amusements in which it was not necessary for them to participate, while her engagements abroad prevented her from noticing that parties at home were less frequent than formerly.

As the friend of the new-married pair, Miss Neville could not fail of receiving a profusion of civilities from those who formed the circle of their acquaintance, and that was decidedly composed of persons who considered themselves arbiters of fashion, and of no small consequence in the scale of society. The cant phrases so current among this class, were scarcely intelligible to one whose style, both of speaking and writing, had been acquired from reading the productions of the best authors, and from a silent attention to the conversation of men remarkable for

the correctness of their language and the soundness of their judgment. Politeness chained her tongue, though the sparkling intelligence of her eye declared to an accurate observer, that although not an actor on the boards she trod, she was no indifferent spectator. Mr. Rochford soon discerned this, and sought to give a scope to the powers of her mind, by drawing forth her opinions on various subjects, when the party was of that select number to admit of general conversation. With a view of becoming an orator in St. Stephen's Chapel, that gentleman had studied rhetorick and the art of speaking under a fashionable professor, who, however, did not undertake to give his pupils, along with a correct pronunciation, capacity for discussing an argument. Rochford had imbibed knowledge enough of language to enable him to talk of etymologies and analogies, with an imposing air to those who knew less

of the subject than himself. Without attempting to confute her host, Constantia sometimes made shrewd remarks that convinced him of his inferiority, and which, he was sorry to observe, lowered him in the estimation of those on whom he intended the brilliancy of his talents should make some impression. On such occasions he generally contrived to have it understood, that he had taken the opposite side of the question, merely for the sake of acquiring information, by listening to what so able an advocate could urge in favour of the cause. It has been said, that "every man has his price," and "every woman her weak side," with what justice I cannot pretend to determine, though I am obliged to confess that my heroine did not prove herself to be invulnerable to flattery. With all her discriminating powers, she believed Rochford to be in earnest when he paid her this compliment at the expence of truth, while

he imagining that his applauses were peculiarly acceptable, took care to bestow them with a sparing hand, treasuring up in his memory the insight into her character which he had by these means obtained, and not doubting but at some future period it would be his turn to triumph.

Miss Neville was so much in the habit of associating with people of superior abilities, who are ever open to conviction, and by no means ashamed of acknowledging an error of judgment, that she could have formed no idea of the littleness of mind of the man with whom she was condescending to converse. Her sentiments were not obtruded upon him, but extorted, on pain, if silent, of being convicted of rudeness to the husband of her friend. The art of dissembling had never formed a part of her study; she knew not the sacrifices that are daily made to the prevalent

lent taste of the company, and that in emerging from the circle in which, as Mr. Neville's daughter she had hitherto moved, her former knowledge of manners and mankind, would prove but of little value. Mrs. Rochford was too much occupied by the novelty of her situation, to pay much attention to any one but herself, the decoration of her person engrossing no small portion of her time and thoughts. Constantia in the midst of gaiety was solitary, earnestly desiring to return to that paternal home from which she had never before been a day absent, and where all her hopes and wishes centered.

It may here be requisite to state why Constantia did not undertake her proposed tour to Wales. The year succeeding the visit to Mr. Selwyn, having been named by him for his son's removal to London, Mr. Neville made the necessary arrangements for his re-

 ception,

ception, taking the trouble of forming an acquaintance with various medical men, to whom he might introduce young Selwyn, and bespeaking their good offices in his favour. The wary *step-mother*, however, devised expedients to postpone the journey to another year. Mr. Selwyn's excuses for delay, were too flimsy to deceive Mr. Neville, who in return delivered his sentiments so freely on the injustice he was guilty of as a parent, that Mrs. Selwyn determined the intercourse between the families should cease, and poor Mr. Selwyn was too much under petticoat government to remonstrate against her decrees, which were as irrepealable as any of the laws of the Medes and Persians. The young man continued not only insensible to the charms of the blooming Dorothy, but had the audacity to choose a mistress for himself, for which high crime and misdemeanour, he lost all chance of succeeding to the

shop

shop of his uncle; finding it impossible to remain in Haverford West, the door of his paternal dwelling shut, and ignorant of Mr. Neville's friendly dispositions towards him, he ran away to Bristol, and in mere desperation engaged as a surgeon's mate on board a Guineaman, where he soon found a clod of earth whereon to rest his weary head. On receiving the intelligence of his son's death, the worthy but weak-minded Selwyn, smote to the heart-strings by a consciousness of his errors, and the evil consequences resulting from them, fell a victim to self-reproach, leaving his widow in quiet possession of what she deemed the *sovereign good*; while by the connections of her husband she was never disturbed with a single enquiry, all too sincerely despising her avaricious unfeeling heart to have any desire for contending with her for property, the extent of which was only known to herself, and by her repre-

sented to be a mere trifle when debts were paid. The benevolent disposition of her husband, and his bias to a particular sect, whose ministers following the *letter* rather than the *spirit* of the law, travel from place to place, provided with neither scrip, nor food, nor money in their purse, to whom his was ever open, gave an air of plausibility to her reasonings, nor were they much doubted, till some years after an adventurer from the metropolis bringing up as his wife a rich widow from Wales, who proved to be Mrs. Selwyn, rather caused *all* who knew her as such, to doubt the veracity of her former assertions, and to be nowise ambitious of acknowledging her acquaintance. It is said that the itinerant son of medicine, amply revenged the cause of the first husband, by keeping his fair rib in the most humiliating slavery, compelling her to pay visits to people of the lowest class, whom he either attended or wished

to

to attend; and as he strove to establish himself in the obstetric art, the servile flatteries of his wife among the women were of great service, his own temper being so arbitary, that a constant communication with his patients might have retarded rather than promoted his progress to their favour. As if he meant an atonement to the manes of poor young Selwyn, the good doctor (as he dubbed himself, for those who consulted him, never asked at what university he had graduated, and his modesty was too great to display to them his diploma,) insisted on her paying proper attention to his two daughters, who, to escape their father's tyranny, had made imprudent marriages; and without the aid of the well-stored trunks of linen of their stepmother, would have found it difficult to make a decent appearance, when they came to take their Sunday's dinner with their father, at whose table they were perfectly at home, husbands,

children, and all; nor could the lady-mother, in return for all the benefits conferred, get one smile of thanks, excepting from the infants, who were too young and innocent to be influenced by the example of their seniors. Thus do we see no character so submissive, so patient under insult, and even injury, as the proud despot of a domestic circle, who has made all her houshold crouch beneath her sway, and who for great part of her life had but to issue her imperial mandates with a certainty of their being enforced. Resist such persons with firmness, and their courage vanishes. Read this simple sketch (the truth of which many living witnesses can testify) ye fathers, who are unfortunate enough to lose the partners of your affection ere they have seen their children arrive at maturity; in forming a second marriage, think of the fate of Selwyn. It must be your own fault if *your wife* prove not *their mother*.

Beg-

Begging my heroine's pardon for this digression, (and it will not be found unconnected with the object for which her history is presented to the public, —that of shewing the ways of Providence to man;) I believe I must recollect that she has entered her twenty-first year, without my having recorded one civil speech made to her by her numerous lovers; for what woman possessing her attractions of mind and person, ever passed through her teens unassailed by *some* who felt their power. Constantia, though too busy a character to *fall in love*, *pour passer le tems*, was no stoic, while she suffered her judgment to exercise itself instead of being enlisted in the service of passion.

One gentleman who had admired her sprightliness in the West Indies, on renewing the acquaintance in England, from a similarity in their sentiments and pursuits, excited a degree of interest in her

her bosom, which might easily have been converted into lasting attachment, had not his concerns obliged him to return to St. Christopher's, with little probability of his being able for some years to reside elsewhere. To bid adieu to the man whom she preferred to any she had yet seen or known, was no pleasing task to Constantia, yet it was light when compared to what she must have endured in separating from her parents. At seventeen she was well aware, that the obligations they had conferred upon her were incalculable; neither they nor her lover suspected the state of her feelings; she suffered him to depart without giving him any reason to believe, that had his station been in the same place with that of her family, his pretensions to her favour might have been crowned with success. Always attentive to her father's guests, Constantia knew not that any of their visits were to be placed to her account; while

while it was confidently believed that she was engaged to a young man of the name of Hamilton, who, though rising in the world, found her father's countenance and advice of no small service to him in his undertakings; on the other hand, Mr. Neville sometimes made him servicable in transacting business, to which he could not himself give the requisite attention. During the visit to Devonshire Place, this piece of intelligence was communicated to Mr. Neville, by an over officious friend, who advised him, if it were not true, to desire the supposed lover to abstain from visiting so frequently at his house; such a report being likely to injure his daughter, who was too charming a girl to have her happiness thus trifled with. It so happened that Mrs. Rochford could not accompany her fair friend home; and that in passing through a street, where resided a family of her acquaintance, none of whom she had seen

from

from the preceding winter, it occurred to her, that this was a favourable opportunity to enquire after their health. Here she was assailed with the common-place questions of, " Had she been taking a lesson from the bride, in order to know how to acquit herself as Mrs. Hamilton?" These observations astonished as much as they wounded the delicacy of the person to whom they were addressed, her replies were short, but expressive of resentment towards the person who could venture to take such liberties with her name, as to join it with that of a gentleman whom she had not the smallest reason to believe thought of her in any other light than as a friend. On meeting her parents, they easily discerned that something had happened to agitate her spirits; her joy at finding herself once more at home, soon made her countenance wear its wonted expression; they therefore sought not to discover the source of her uneasiness, trusting to her natural openness

openness for communicating what it was proper they should know; wisely judging, that if any part of it might relate to the family she had lately left, the whole ought to be deemed most sacred, and not breathed even in a whisper to them. After dinner, when all unpleasant reflections were banished, from the happiness they enjoyed in a renewal of that intercourse which Constantia's presence rendered doubly delightful, Mr. Neville carlessly asked his wife, if young Hamilton had called in the forenoon? At the name, Constantia's cheeks were suffused with blushes. The silence of her parents, while she was conscious their eyes were fixed upon her, made them take a still deeper dye. Her sensations were painful in the extreme, and would, if much longer endured, have compelled her to withdraw to find relief in tears. The kind solicitude of her father, and the affectionate tenderness of her mother,

soon

soon drew the artless Constantia to relate the substance of Miss Plimpton's information, who she now discovered, was not the only person prepossessed with the same idea. Wounded pride, in thus being disposed of without her consent, made the lady view the pretensions of Mr. Hamilton in a most unfavourable light, while she determined to convince him by her future behaviour, how much he had misunderstood the past, if he believed the ease and good humour with which she always received him, was intended as a mark of encouragement to addresses of which she had never heard, and could only by himself be assured that he ever meant to pay. Unwilling to touch on a subject of so delicate a nature, Mr. Neville trusted to his daughter's good sense for conducting the affair properly, contenting himself with strengthening her resolution to assert her independence, which he conceived in this instance as violated.

violated. The gentleman was not a little hurt on his next visit, at finding his reception so different to his expectations. His entrance appeared to be the signal for the departure of that gaiety and rational delight, which was always found in the family circle of Mr. Neville. Constantia, the artless mirthful Constantia, was gravity personified. Mortified to the quick at these changes, he sought not to explain them by a reference to his own conduct, which he ought to have felt had not been of that open manly nature to entitle him to confidence. Self becomes immaculate when judged by those who take no pains to be thoroughly acquainted with their own characters. If thwarted or disappointed in a favourite pursuit, they believe themselves wholly exempt from blame. Thus did the experience of long acquaintance, the knowledge of Constantia's intrinsic worth, her filial affection, the graces of her conversation,

tion, and sincerity of her expressions, vanish away like " the baseless fabric of a vision." She was capricious, unjust, in short, spoiled by the company she had kept, and if the trifling of one or two *men* of the *ton*, had so far taken possession of her thoughts, as to prevent her from paying her usual attention to old acquaintances, it was fortunate for them that the instability of her disposition was so easily developed. When we see the cup of happiness thus wantonly dashed from the lips, who can but pity the person guilty of such folly; for though he should be master of boundless wealth, his existence will be cheerless, nor can he ever venture to attach himself to another virtuous woman; irresolution keeps him single, while he is the dupe of the artful and designing part of the sex, who most amply revenge the cause of her, whose peace of mind may for a time be affected by his desertion.

Miss

Miss Neville continued her intimacy with Mrs. Rochford, though she seldom paid her visits of any length. The anxiety of her parents respecting their West India property, now became very visible. Montagu wilfully in fault, appeared to his mother almost an impossibility, as little could his father have believed, but from the most positive evidence, that he had squandered away at the gaming-table, sums which should have been invested in bills, or produce, for the support of his credit in England. Misfortunes never come alone. Mr. Neville, for some years past, had furnished his wife's nephew, Mr. Bellmour of Jamaica, with the various articles requisite for sale in a merchant's store in Kingston. Mrs. Neville always remembering the character of the father, frequently admonished her husband to place no dependence on the honour or honesty of the son of such a man. The worthy merchant ridiculed

her

her prejudices, while he exultingly communicated the proofs which he had in his possession of the young man's punctuality in payments, adding, he was sure she would find him desirous of wiping off the reproach attached to the memory of his father. A much larger order than usual had been shipped by the fleet of the preceding year, which was acknowledged to have arrived in good condition, without a promise of remitting the proceeds at the accustomed time. In perusing this letter, Mrs. Neville again started doubts of the propriety of giving credit to her nephew, and expressed her surprize that the amount of the invoices were so considerable; Mr. Neville not having mentioned to her when the order was received, that it exceeded those of former years. Many mails arriving from Jamaica without either bills, or apologies for not sending any, Mr. Neville was convinced that it would

would have been for his interest, if he had, in this instance, submitted to the judgment of his wife, instead of obeying the dictates of a generous mind, that led him to judge of the principles of others by his own ideas of rectitude, till their conduct too often proved them to be diametrically opposite.

Claimants for commercial debts, it is well known, are not easily put off. Mr. Neville disposed of his East India stock, to enable him to make good his engagements to tradesmen, and despising that base fear which withholds many a mercantile man from retrenching his expences, lest his creditors should take the alarm, he laid down his carriage, confiding to the friends of his bosom, his wife and daughter, the necessity that led to this step, and hoping from their œconomical regulations, much of the former expenditure in housekeeping might be lessened, while the cheerfulness

fulness with which he was confident they would submit to these privations, must induce their acquaintance to believe no actual loss to have been sustained, but merely a temporary suspension of remittances, to which all persons residing at a distance from their property were known to be liable.

If Constantia had been permitted to follow the dictates of her inclination, she would in consequence of the change in their mode of living, have preferred remaining at home with her father and mother to joining the gay throng of an assembly; when, however, they insisted on her accompanying her friends thither as usual, the mercurial particles of her composition, which she inherited from her father, generally displayed themselves, while her good humour and vivacity enlivened all who were admitted to partake of her conversation. Mr. Hamilton frequented the same balls that

that Miss Neville did, and had sometimes been favoured with her hand in the dance; since her assumed distance of manner, he had not ventured to solicit it. One evening, that her party went in very late to one of these meetings, a gentleman of showy appearance, whom she had frequently seen while a guest at Devonshire Place, came up to request the honour of being her partner, with the air of a person who had just discovered the object he had been long in search of. Mr. Athersey had many qualifications for a partner at a ball; such as a fine person, being a man of fashion; an elegant dancer, and a favourite of Plutus. In chusing a partner for life, other qualities might have been deemed more essential to happiness, at least by a Constantia Neville. Fortunately for the female sex, a negative is allowed them in the latter instance, though they should not be able to urge a pre-engagement as the motive for refusing

fusing to give their hands. It has been often said, that those under the influence of the blind deity, are in their own opinion remarkably clear-sighted, while it is evident to the spectator, that whoever enlists under his banner, yields up his faculties to an arbitrary master, whose delight it is to make his votaries view objects through inverted optics.

Mr. Athersey was of that description of persons, that would rather saunter about picking their teeth, or sit down to half-crown whist with antiquated spinsters, and mothers who forget they have daughters to take care of, than lead down a dance with any lady who did not happen to be in fashion, or whom he supposed his attentions would not make, in a great degree, the belle of the evening. Miss Neville's notoriety he conceived perfectly established, from having met her at Rochford's, and he doubted not that in the party there assembled,

sembled, his claims to consequence were deemed equally admissible. This man, while uttering empty nothings, had a mode of delivering them, as if he were communicating tidings of the last importance. A woman little accustomed to endure the gaze of effrontery, must appear embarrassed while attending to the conversation of such a man.

This follower of *les modes* was not a little disappointed in the conversational talents of his fair partner. The subjects he started she felt nowise disposed to discuss, and actually yawned while he was striving to make her comprehend the properties of a new kind of carriage he had just invented, which he was confident would excel any of those driven by the Lord Jehu's of Piccadilly, or other gentlemen of the whip, who like them panted for fame. Constantia, not to appear wholly insensible to what was said, asked Mr. Athersey if

he purposed to exhibit the carriage, when completed, in Hyde Park? Oh no! he replied, it had been constructed to oblige his friend Sir Harry Dash'em, who meant to drive it himself, six in hand, through Piccadilly, under the very noses of the men who believed no person would dare drive against them.

This specimen served to shew Miss Neville the depth of her partner's understanding, as did his boast of Sir Harry's friendship the purity of his morals, when she recollected that the preceding Sunday was pointed out to her in Hyde Park, the most exquisitely finished, highly-ornamented *vis a vis* that voluptuousness could have contrived, in which was inclosed the favourite *Sultana* of Sir Harry, who, like another *Cleopatra*, seemed to be fanned by winged zephyrs, and to banquet on pearls, or even diamonds, if her wayward humour should so order it. "And this,

this, thought Constantia, is one of the lords of the creation, who but from a perversion of intellect might be entitled to respect; while he must now make himself despised for becoming the shadow of one of the most insignificant of those empty beings, who ruin their fortunes and impair their constitutions, in order to be talked of in the circles of fashion, giving place in due time to others equally ambitious of running the same race."

The young man, who had for some months appeared to be desirous of emulating the inconsistency of Beaumont and Fletcher's Hypolita, was now convinced that he had discovered Miss Neville's favoured admirer, and the cause of her coldness to him; so little was he capable of estimating the value of the woman with whom he had been for some years in habits of friendship, and whose affections it is not impos-

sible he might have gained, had he ever declared to herself the impression she had made on his heart. The world sometimes judges with more precision than at first sight it is believed to do; that part of it to which the family of Neville were known, imputed to Mr. Hamilton motives for his conduct, which, if actuated by, he deserved to endure, in their full force, " the pangs of despised love." It requires, said they, no extraordinary effort of generosity to pay attention to sensible well-principled people, even while they are contending with adverse fortune, and consequently may need support from their friends; but for a man to connect himself with a falling house, to unite his interest with that of a family whose fortunes are known to be in the wane, that was not within the bounds of probability, and thus Gossip Report accounted for Miss Neville's losing her lover. The same cause produced the

vicissitudes

vicissitudes of her life, and furnishes (it is humbly hoped) an instructive lesson to the young and prosperous, who are now the gay inmates of the paternal dwelling, little dreaming that the hour may be fast approaching when all shall fail; even their own friend, and their father's friend, shall desert them; then may they be enabled to put their trust in that heavenly Parent who never forsakes those that unfeignedly love him, and obey his commands! Let them reflect before it is too late on the instability of human enjoyments, and learn, that a conscience void of reproach, with activity of body and mind, are blessings of inestimable value to themselves; and possessing these, they must ever be capable of administering to the happiness of their fellow-creatures, even while their defenceless heads are biding "the pelting of the pitiless storm."

CHAP. VIII.

Eyes dazzled long by fiction's gaudy rays,
In modest truth no light nor beauty find.

BEATTIE'S MINSTREL.

"AND this is called a novel?" says one of my youthful readers at the conclusion of the last Chapter. "I protest, I expected from the title some amusement in looking it over; but if the author goes on in this stupid style, I shall send the remaining Volumes back to the library. Why there is not an old castle to be pried into, nor a rusty key found, nor a pretty description of any thing we have never seen the like of, in the whole book."

To such criticisers of Constantia, I will give this piece of information, that the farther they proceed in her history, the

the less will they find it adapted to their taste; as though placed in situations of trial and difficulty, none of them are occasioned by a desire to gratify an inordinate curiosity, which leads those who possess it to penetrate through stone walls, and explore dungeons, rather than not be mistress of the hidden secret. They will, notwithstanding, discover both fortitude and perseverance in the conduct of Miss Neville, while her highest ambition is to be considered a dutiful affectionate daughter, a sincere friend, and a professor of the religion of her ancestors, from a thorough conviction of the purity of its precepts, and the blessings it diffuses to society. So my dear young ladies, if you go on, remember it is at your own risk; you must acquit me of any intention to trick you into a perusal of old-fashioned sentiments, and the incidents of common life.

Mr. Montagu Neville now deemed it requisite to explain to his father, that having become security to a considerable amount for an intimate friend, who had been obliged suddenly to leave Barbadoes, he had it not at present in his power to remit either bills, or produce, though he hoped very shortly to get the better of his embarrassments, when every exertion should be made to put the affairs of the concern into a proper train, so that no real injury might be sustained by the circulation being for a time impeded. This was a blow little expected by Mr. Neville. Some decisive step it was necessary to take. Many persons had advised sending an attorney to Jamaica, to seize on the property of Bellmour, who had lately married a widow of no fortune, whose son, by her husband, he immediately sent to England, and at his (or rather his creditors') cost, the youth was receiving a most liberal and expensive education.

education. To delegate to a mercenary stranger the task of revising their son's proceedings, appeared to Mr. and Mrs. Neville harsh and unnatural, while it was obviously as necessary to put a stop to his career, as to assert their claims in Jamaica. A very few days' deliberation sufficed to determine Mrs. Neville on the part it was necessary for her to take. A voyage to the West Indies, unaccompanied by any of her own family, was not to be considered as a matter of choice; undertaken with a view to serve objects so deservedly dear, it had no terrors to the mind that could project it. Mr. Neville consented, with reluctance, to the measure, while he felt its propriety, and that to no other person but his wife, sufficient authority could be given to induce Bellmour to come to a settlement. Of her influence on her son's mind he entertained no doubts; to whom by letter, he in the strongest terms, represented the state

to which his imprudence had brought three people, whose welfare and happiness it should have been the study of his life to promote. Anxiety for his daughter's future provision, now that he had not the power of vesting property in the funds in her name when she became of age, which he had for some time resolved upon, prompted him to request the son to yield to her his share of Mr. Hayman's nuptial present; the amount of the part settled on the children, though originally but five hundred pounds, with the accumulation of interest for so many years, was, in the opinion of a father, an object of importance to secure, in case of sudden death, for the maintenance of his daughter.

The blank in Constantia's enjoyments at the departure of her mother, was most sensibly felt, while she strove to support her father's spirits, who soon

lost relish for any society but her's. The season, when in the opinion of the fashionable world, London becomes a desert, having now arrived, she was released from all engagements but those in which her heart was interested, and that led her to find the most ecstatic delight in the performance of her duty. A parent in affliction has claims upon our tenderness of a nature scarcely definable; it is, (if the expression be allowable) an union of the filial and parental affections; we may nurture and cherish those from whom we have received the gift of life, though we do not like the Roman matron furnish food to the body from that fountain from which it is intended our offspring should derive support.

Of what service would it be to relate to my readers, how few of Miss Neville's acquaintance sought to draw her from retirement? Those generous spirits

rits who are the friends of our virtues and good qualities, not the lovers of the exquisite viands they meet at our tables, need not a stimulative to do good to those labouring under the pressure of misfortune ; and the selfish many who flee from the presence of such, as if poverty were infectious, while their conduct proves that they do not comprehend the precepts of the divine moralist, can it be matter of surprise if the lash of the satyrist wave over their heads equally unregarded?

Mrs. Rochford, to do her justice, was always desirous of having Miss Neville for her guest, and expressed the deepest regret that she could not accompany her to the country ; the latter was still the enlivening companion, she claimed no person's sympathy, for the affairs of her family were never the subject of her discourse ; excepting the separation from her mother, the change of circum-

circumstances took from Constantia no part of her comforts. The hours formerly occupied in riding out, paying or receiving visits, were now of inestimable value. She had ever wooed time as a friend, whose stay she wished prolonged, rather than as an enemy, to kill whom is the sole pursuit of the idle.

Mr. Neville's seclusion had much more fatal effects; habituated to exercise, and the lover of social intercourse, his abstaining from both engendered complaints that neither medicine nor filial tenderness could eradicate. The account of the safe arrival of Mrs. Neville, and that Montagu was doing every thing for their benefit they could themselves desire, gave a fillip to nature, of which it stood much in need. Penetrated with the detail of his father's disappointments and losses, the son gave the most positive assurances that

that his future conduct should be of that nature, as would, he trusted, atone for past imprudence. The omitting to answer that part of the letter which related to the transfer of his share of so trifling a sum to his sister, was not imputed by Mr. Neville to his being reluctant to the measure. When, however, the next mail arrived, all doubts were removed, by his refusing to comply with the request, alledging in excuse, the uncertainty of West India property, and that, small as the sum was, its being secure in England might make it at some future period of great service to himself, while it could not be of much importance to his sister, whom he should ever consider entitled to share his fortune, of which disposition towards her, he trusted there required no other pledge but his word. High sounding periods make little impression in favour of the party that has recourse to them, when actions do not correspond

pond with declarations. Mr. Neville was pained to the soul by discovering the selfish narrow policy that influenced the conduct of his only son. Having never communicated his intentions to his daughter, he forbore to acquaint her with the result of his proposal, though he could not restrain his indignation when answering the letter, the receipt of which had conveyed to his mind the strong conviction of the unworthiness of the writer. By this proceeding the affectionate parent sowed in the mind of Montagu seeds of dislike and jealousy towards his sister, who cherished for him sentiments of the tenderest affection, and sincerest regard; judging of his feelings by her own, she considered their interests inseparable, and to promote his, scrupled not to make any sacrifices he required, thinking that to assist a brother in distress, all personal considerations should be forgotten. Alas! how painful to the gene-

generous mind, is the first sensation of distrust it experiences. We cling to early impressions, till the lacerated heart is compelled to acknowledge them to be erroneous. Fortunate may we think ourselves if the discovery be made in time to preserve our peace of mind. Exquisite sensibility is too often enshrined in a feeble form, when the former is deeply wounded, the latter bends beneath the chilling blight of unkindness, as the bearded thistle under the blast which sweeps mournfully across the lone heath.

In detailing the sufferings of a victim of principle, how does the heart sicken to be compelled to paint from the life, the Bellmours' and Montagus' of the world, triumphantly feeding on the spoils of the upright, noble-minded Nevilles, denying themselves every gratification, from a fear of infringing on the rights

rights of others. The hope of immortality, and the peace which dwells within, smooths the rugged road of the one, while under the roses which strew the path of the other, lurks a thorn, whose wounds are past remedying. In the hour of calm reflection, who would not rather wish to be Neville, brought to an early grave by ingratitude and treachery, than either of those whose extravagance caused them to involve in ruin, the man, without whose countenance and protection, they had never been known?

Could Constantia reason thus! Who but the cold sceptic, that affects to despise the consolations of religion, would ask such a question?

To view paralysed the hand that was wont to yield the pressure of affection; the eye rolling in vacancy that ever beamed with intelligence, and the voice mute, to which we have listened with rapture;

rapture; these are trials that appal the stoutest heart. What effect must they have on the fervid imagination of youth? Constantia was herself in the gloom of a sick chamber; with every fibre on the rack, she was able to administer the last sad offices to a dying parent, to catch the parting sigh, and to contemplate the smile that irradiated the countenance in death. Blush ye that dread to watch the expiring lamp of life, that quit with indecent haste the spot where lie the remains of those whom, when living ye affected to honour; blush, I say, at the superior fortitude of one, who, though young in years, was old enough in habits of reflection to feel the propriety of continuing under the same roof with the remains of her much loved parent, till all that was mortal of him was consigned to its native earth.

When this sad hour was past, when mental or bodily exertion could benefit

no

no person but herself, then did the strength fail. Nature is only capable of making certain efforts, and the more the mind strives for mastery over the body, the greater shock does the animal system sustain when the conflict is over.

The principal clerk of Mr. Neville, was most devotedly attached to the interests of his master's family. His wife, a respectable woman, had, at his desire, taken up her residence in Bloomsbury-square, on the first surmise of Mr. Neville's life being in danger. She continued her attentions to the daughter, who through her kindness, aided by skilful medical advice, was soon pronounced to be in a convalescent state. The habitation of Somers, though humble, was by no means devoid of those accommodations which the English with peculiar emphasis denominate *comforts*. It was in the skirts of

of the town, and change of air being prescribed for Miss Neville, she proposed to Mrs. Somers to become her boarder, till letters from her mother should direct her how to dispose of herself. Absorbed by the poignancy of her sorrow, and the magnitude of her loss, she was wholly indifferent to outward objects; the innocent endearments of the children of the worthy couple, under whose roof she now was, awakened feelings that contributed more to reconcile her to life, than volumes of any other book but that of Nature could have done. *The Lady*, from her kindness and condescension, soon became as attractive to the young folks, as from her mournful garb she had at first sight been repulsive.

Could short-sighted mortals pry into the events of futurity, it is not improbable that Mrs. Neville, on her daughter's account, would have sought to keep

keep up that kind of correspondence with her sister Mrs. Williamson, as would on this emergency have ensured to her an asylum in her house. The modes of education and habits of living of the two sisters, have been already declared to be wholly opposite. In less than a year after the arrival of the Neville family in England, the reverend Doctor and his lady made an excursion to the metropolis, the former to thank the Lord Chancellor for preferment, perhaps to purchase books; the latter, to pay visits and hear the news. When the joy at seeing her sister after so long a separation subsided, she expressed her surprize at her niece not being sent to school; adding, that she was not the least like her nephew Montagu, who had an ease of manners and address about him, which would never have been acquired, had he sat *mopish* by his father's fireside all day, which she presumed Miss Constantia was allowed

to

to do. The sparkling eye and rosy tint on her cheek, as well as firm step when she walked, would have given the lie to such an accusation, if those who made it had not been wilfully blind. To pursue the conversation no farther (though it was renewed every time the sisters met) their sentiments respecting the disposal of the fair exotic, were so discordant, that an irremediable breach was the consequence, and when, on the death of the Doctor, of which the only notice received was by the public papers, Mrs. Neville felt disposed to offer consolation, she was withheld from doing so, lest her sister should impute to interested motives her wishing at that season to renew the connection.

The death happening at the moment that remittances from both Montagu and Belmour failed, when a change in the style of living took place, and declared

clared to all busy enquirers, that Mr. Neville's affairs were not in the most prosperous state. The voyage to the West Indies being entered upon almost as soon as suggested, the anxious mother had neither recollection nor leisure for writing to a sister of whom she had not heard, except through report, for so many years.

Thus was Constantia left without a probability of receiving attention from any person but Mrs. Rochford, who failed not on this occasion to pay her tribute of condolence, while she reiterated her offers of friendship, closing her letter with a promise of returning to London as soon as Mr. Rochford's engagements would permit, when she trusted her friend would make her house a home, nor think of separating till the arrival of her mother or brother should require her presence elsewhere. Much as it gratified Constantia to re-

ceive such proofs of attachment from her oldest female acquaintance in England, it would have accorded better with her present frame of mind, to have declined entering into so gay a circle. Somers endeavoured to shew her the propriety of accepting Mrs. Rochford's invitation; he grieved to see his revered master's daughter veiled in obscurity, yet he wished to let the house for the winter, that she had lately occupied, as by that means he would be furnished with ready-money to supply her necessities, and defray incidental expences, without touching on bills remitted from correspondents, which could immediately be appropriated to the discharge of debts already incurred. Little sensible of the value of money, Constantia had, however, too just a mode of thinking and judging, not to feel the full force of such arguments. The interval she past in endeavouring to fortify her mind for whatever of adverse

verse fortune might yet be her portion; well aware that in Mrs. Rochford's circle of acquaintance, as well as her own, she would now be considered in a state of dependence, she determined to become callous to the sneers of the meanly proud, to be silent where her sentiments, if expressed, could not be in unison with those of the people she associated with, and to keep a strict guard on herself, in delivering even to Mr. or Mrs. Rochford, her opinion of the various persons who might frequent their house.

Little did Mr. Neville imagine that when cultivating the faculties and refining the taste of his daughter, he ought rather to have been engaging professors to teach her those accomplishments that may be deemed mechanical, and that the studies which in the first part of her life constituted her

chief happiness, could not afterwards be pursued for fear of giving offence, by an appearance of arrogating to herself a superiority of which she never thought. To excel in the arts of pleasing when no longer a favourite of fortune, the heart requires to be cased in adamant, the tongue to be chained except for the purposes of flattery, and a ready acquiescence to the sentiments of superiors, while the hands and eyes must be perpetually employed in their service, or in administering to their amusement. If any of the affluent of my own sex, guilty of imposing this mental slavery on the humble dependant, should condescend to read these pages, let me advise them to consider well the probable consequences of such tyranny. Through *their* harsh treatment should the hunted doe break the pales that separate her from the vicious, how dreadful will be their reflections when that hour cometh which

which awaiteth all living, and to ward off which, even for a day, no expedient can be devised.

Until the chief glory of women consists in protecting and supporting each other in what is laudable, so long may we despair of a reformation in morals. The delicately brought up unportioned young female, is truly an object of commisseration; most fervently does the writer who now wields the pen, dedicate her feeble powers to their cause, while at this epoch, the eve of the commencement of the nineteenth century, she hopes, though amid the tumults of war, and the jarring of parties, to awaken British humanity (to which the unfortunate never yet appealed in vain) in behalf of her suffering sisters. To prevent the growth of immorality at home (which, if not checked, must in time spread devasta-

tion over the land); to open an asylum for industrious poverty under a fragile form, who hopes to receive protection and support, till she is so habituated to labour, as to procure by her own exertions a maintenance, will surely be an employment as befitting the character of Christian legislators, as any which have yet engrossed their attention, not excepting the humane efforts of those, whose pious desire it is that slavery may be banished from the face of the earth. When Catholic institutions of this nature are permitted to take root, and to flourish, in a country to whose interests they must, from the very nature of things, be hostile, it surely behoves all who venerate the established religion, to endeavour to counteract the pernicious effects of such establishments, by affording to the virtuously disposed children of affliction, that shelter which they offer; in return for which great benefit

nefit they will not be required to immolate at the shrine of false devotion, those feelings and affections wisely implanted in our bosoms by the Author of Nature; the attempt to eradicate which, tends to destroy the links by which the human race may be considered as one great family.

CHAP. IX.

Thus unlamented pass the proud away,
The gaze of fools, and pageants of a day;
So perish all, whose breast ne'er learnt to flow
For others good, or melt at others woe.

POPE.

TO come to a decision, and to act in conformity to it, was with Miss Neville but one effort. In removing to Devonshire Place, it is true, her tears flowed fast at the recollection of past joys, while her heart beat at the ideal sound of that voice, whose accents she knew would never more greet her ear. The infantine regrets of Somers's children at her departure, and the respectful attentions of himself and wife, expressed in deeds more than words, soon, however, called to her mind what she owed to the Supreme Disposer of events,

for

for having thus mingled in the bitter cup of which she had drank, ingredients of a nature so balsamic, and so well calculated to heal the wounds he had inflicted.

Her behaviour on entering her new abode was therefore marked with no display of emotion; serene and collected, she determined to seek in the resources of her own mind a relief from society, which she should neither avoid nor court.

Mrs. Rochford had, since her separation from her friend, become a mother. The cold-blooded woman of fashion never abundantly provided with sentiments of tenderness and affection for any being but herself, having now so many objects that put in for their share of her slender stock, it is not to be wondered that the portion allotted to friendship fell infinitely short of its due.

Constansia, warm and affectionate by nature, had a gratefulness of temper which ever made her susceptible of kindness, though received from persons with whom she would not have been induced to converse, had it been necessary to make the first advances to acquaintance. Governed in every action of her life by rectitude of principle, the impulse of the moment was seldom checked, to give time for the sober decisions of judgment. Influenced by no motives but what were avowed, she believed all with whom she associated to be equally sincere.

To Mrs. Rochford she felt highly obliged, and she determined by every means in her power to prove that she was so. It has been already said, that the awful distance between the two ladies in point of intellectual knowledge, was considerably lessened by the West Indian's forbearing to enter on subjects which

which she knew were above the comprehension of the other. Mr. Rochford, though in his own mind fully persuaded that Miss Neville must consider his wife in the light of an overgrown baby, who was perpetually exchanging one rattle for another, chose to be much amused at her pretensions to wit, and at her dullness of apprehension, in not perceiving he was (to use a fashionable cant expression) *quizzing* her, when she thought herself secure of his applauses.

"Well, I protest, George, you deceived me," says Mrs. Rochford in reply (as they were whirled along on the road to the capital); "I really thought you admired her conversation, and as I am not disposed to be jealous of a female disputant, for I observe men like those women best who know least; I asked her to pass the winter with us, as much to please you as myself; I hope she will not think it necessary to grieve

long for a father who has taken no care to see her settled before he died. I have heard from two or three of her acquaintances, that his refusing to give any money down, was the cause of the match with young Hamilton going off. I dare say, if the truth were known, she is thinking more of him than any one else, living or dead, for he is very handsome, and dangled after her for several years."

Mr. Rochford now enquired who Mr. Hamilton was, and how long a a time had elapsed since the acquaintance between their fair friend and him terminated; again expressing his contempt for her understanding, and that he delighted in mortifying one so self-sufficient. "Apropos," continued Mr. Rochford, "suppose we make over to this judicious lady the care of little Georgiana; I think she will be an excellent

cellent directress of the nursery, and save you a great deal of trouble."

"I am quite of your opinion, George, and give you credit for the idea, as I feared her hours of rising in the morning and mine would not suit, but the child may amuse her till breakfast, and the nurse will be obliged to have it early drest, for fear of there being a report made to me of her negligence."

To have heard on their first meeting the exclamations of, "*Dear Constantia*, how considerately kind to be here to receive us," from the wife; "And, Miss Neville, you make me *superlatively happy*, by honouring this house with your presence," of the husband; who could have imagined that a conversation like the preceding had been put a stop to by the postillion's driving up to the threshold of that habitation, where

so

so ostentatious a display of benevolence and kindness was made.

For the first time did Miss Neville recollect that her actions were controûlable by another power than her own will. Parental jurisdiction she was freed from by the death of her father, the absence of her mother, and her having attained to what the law terms years of discretion. As, however, she had never had obedience exacted from her, but found the compliance with the wishes of those she loved most consonant to her own inclinations, and conducive to happiness; she had, in fact, never been subjected to those petty troubles which invade the peace of the self-willed. To comply with Mrs. Rochford's request, in regard to overlooking Georgiana, was to ensure to herself a source of enjoyment, though she could not help secretly condemning the

the mother, who considered fulfilling engagements *abroad* more indispensable than those which ought to have existed *at home*. These reflections she prudently confined to her own bosom, most cordially thanking her mother for having taught her to consider, that no sacrifice was too great for a woman to make in the rearing of her offspring, and that utter inability from weakness in the animal system was the only proper reason that could be urged, for submitting to another the office of nurse.

In endeavouring to bear with the supercilious haughtiness of Sir Charles and Lady Darlington, Constantia felt that her native freedom was bartered for some ideal good, the value of which she had yet to learn. The abrupt questions they asked relative to family concerns, her mother's views in going abroad, and others, in which they could have no interest, save that of gratifying impertinent

impertinent curiosity, frequently caused the cheek of the person so catechised to glow with the blush of honest indignation and wounded pride. Rochford was, on such occasions, delicately attentive to the feelings of his guest, imperceptibly changing the discourse, or concluding the subject, by an eulogium on the virtues and talents of Mr. Neville. Here then was praise rendered palatable, which, if immediately addressed to herself, would have been rejected with disdain. Insensibly, on an intimate acquaintance, the husband appeared a more estimable character in the eyes of friendship than the wife. The foolish fondness of the latter for her infant, displayed itself in a way that proved her very little interested in its enjoying a vigorous constitution, or equable disposition. On the contrary, she remonstrated against the cruelty of immersing it in cold water, and of not giving into its hand any thing for which

it appeared to cry, while with the most perfect apathy she retired to her own apartment, leaving to others to practice that vigilance, which a babe for so many months requires from those under whose care it is placed for the night. The attentions of the father to his child were directed to their proper object, and often, when alone with Constantia, he has thanked her in the most animated terms for her goodness towards the infant, hoping she would live to be as sensible of the obligations conferred as he should ever be.

How happy might Amelia be, thought Miss Neville, (after a conversation of this nature) if she would only seek to become the rational companion of her husband; he would then pass those hours in the bosom of his own family that could be spared from public duty, instead of pursuing pleasures abroad, because any company seems more agreeable

greeable to his wife than his conversation.

"Ah! if I ever marry, may it be my lot to find an husband bearing some resemblance to my father. How cordially will duty and inclination then unite to make my own home the seat of peace and unanimity; nor shall my wishes ever lead me astray, to seek happiness in grandeur."

Letters from Mrs. Neville, acknowledging the receipt of those communicating the death of her husband, served to renew the griefs of her daughter. By transcribing a part of one, we may judge of the sentiments which pervaded the whole, every line flowing immediately from the heart.

"Need I urge my beloved child, to prove by her conduct, when so unexpectedly left to her own guidance, that she

she has profited by her unreserved communications with one of the first of men. Let his counsels ever be recollected with pious gratitude; forget not, that amid all the storms which assail the children of men, it is their own fault if they have not one firm friend, even him who sitteth in the heavens, without whose permission not a sparrow falleth to the ground.

"The ocean which now divides me from you, may be my tomb; my eyes may never be gladdened with the sight of what is dearer to me than life, yet the blessed hope of immortality is ours; we may rejoin the spirit of him who is gone before, provided we keep within us consciences as void of offence. Your loss has been severe, and your grief for such a parent could only be assuaged by time. Think, my dearest girl, what mine must have been, under the aggravating circumstances of separation; you had the

the power of soothing the sorrows of him who gave you life, of mitigating both mental and bodily pain by your sweet converse and filial piety; you were gradually prepared for what was to follow, while the shock to me was as sudden as the lightning's flash.—The stroke came from the Almighty, that was my support.

"Could I have recollected that I had ever wilfully inflicted pain, ever swerved in thought, word, or deed, from the engagements which the altar ratified; Oh! then I should have sunk under the bitterness of my own reflections! Your duteous endeavours to calm my fears on your own account, failed not of their effect. The grave has closed upon the husband of my youth, yet I have children who may be the solace of my old age. I cannot fix a time for my return, as I go to Jamaica before I embark for England; and I have arranged

ranged my affairs here, that my son may quit Barbadoes when I do. He will be a protector to his sister. I trust when once we meet we shall part no more.

" In the interval, keep, I beseech you, a strict watch over yourself; with all your good sense, you are unsuspicious as an infant. Vice has but to shew her face to make you shrink from her touch; wearing the semblance of virtue, you may yield to her embrace. Somers has written to me, and explains many things much to my satisfaction, which you did not think of importance to communicate, because they related to yourself. What subject is now so interesting, or presses so home to my feelings, as all that concerns my dearest child. Among the gay and dissipated, be singular, rather than forsake the God of your fathers. Whose conversation was more cheerful and animated than

his whose tongue is now mute? Whose so free from impurity, because from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh?

"Thank your friend, in my name, for her goodness to you, and let me find my Constantia as free from guile, as innocent as I left her."—"Yes, my beloved mother," exclaimed Constantia aloud, "you shall not perceive any change in me; sickness and sorrow may enfeeble the body, but the mind, I trust, will ever retain its vigour. No sordid passions shall be harboured within. I will strive to convince all who know me, that the admonitions of my parents have made the desired impression."

* * * * * *

Sir Charles and Lady Darlington were now to feel what sorrow was; it was their turn to see the grave close upon promised joys. Their darling son,

when nearly entered on his majority, chose in the plenitude of his wisdom to bet, that he could ride fifty miles on his own horse, in a less time than was supposed to be compatible with the strength of either man or beast. The generous animal enabled his master to win his wager, though after reaching the goal he dropped down from excessive fatigue, nor was he ever capable of running another race. Henry Darlington, proud of his success, took no precautions to guard against the effects of such violent exercise; a fever ensued, which in a few days carried into eternity the man who had no access to the temple of fame, but by claiming the assistance of his horse. Such was the issue of those ambitious schemes, on the accomplishment of which so much depended. The patent for the peerage was already made out, and the votes of the electors engaged for the son, who, at the removal of his father to the upper house,

house, was to take the seat which he vacated. Thus does that universal leveller, with an audible voice, give practical lessons on the vanity of human wishes, and the futility of expectations.

Without resources in themselves, insensible to consolation, how truly were the parents of Mrs. Rochford to be pitied. That young person, whom but a few weeks before they were disposed to insult, was now cherished; for in the hour of their affliction she remembered them not but as objects needing commiseration, and with the most perfect good will, gave up every other engagement that she might administer to their comfort. Their passing the days of mourning with their daughter, or rather in her house, furnished Miss Neville with many opportunities of evincing the goodness of her heart. Mrs. Rochford naturally restless, and impatient of restraint, could have no idea of the patient

tient perseverance of her companion, unless she was governed by interest in paying such unremitting attention to her parents, whom, as soon as the funeral was over, she fairly wished out of her house. Lady Darlington had bespoke for Constantia the same mourning ordered by Mrs. Rochford, to which the latter had no objection; but when various costly ornaments of jet, such as Miss Neville had considered above her circumstances, were given along with the dresses, she could scarcely bridle her displeasure, though a set of equal value were at the same time presented by her mother to herself.

The reader who has any insight into character, will not believe that Sir Charles's hopes of founding a family were buried in the grave of his son. His first care was to get the remainder in the patent fixed on his daughter, and her issue, whose consequence was not

a little heightened, in her own opinion, at the probability of her being *a Peeress in her own right*, a *Right Honourable*, and *her Ladyship*, while her husband was plain Mr. Rochford. The latter enjoyed, in idea, the reversion of the good estate that was to enable him to pursue in secret his own pleasures; unincumbered with a title, he considered it of double value to the possessor, for he laughed in his sleeve at his wife proposing to live in any other style, after the death of her father, than he chose she should.

Establishments in town and country befitting the heiress of Darlington Hall, were now confidently talked of; a large house in Portman Square was engaged for the next winter, but the birth-day being near at hand, when all the *fashionables* of the *beau monde* must perforce, retire to "shady groves and purling streams," a superb villa in Sussex,

splendidly furnished and fitted up by a Nabob, who was obliged to take another trip to the East to replenish his purse, was purchased by Sir Charles, now Lord Darlington, and presented to his daughter, with a settlement of two thousand a-year during his life, and a handsome sum to Mr. Rochford for a new carriage and horses, which, it was presumed, he would like to choose himself.

Intoxicated with these proofs of her father's munificence, Mrs. Rochford was displeased that she could not dictate in all things; and though her husband desired her to order at the coachmaker's a carriage of what colour and make she pleased, she had nearly resolved never to enter it, because the horses were a shade darker than she wished them to be.

In all these changes, Constantia was *unchanged*. She forgot not her little charge, nor her tried friends in the New Road. From Somers she learned the names of those who had, on their coming to town, thought it worth while to enquire after her, and was not a little surprized to hear that Miss Plimpton had called twice. Mrs. Somers not choosing, till she had her husband's permission, to give Miss Neville's address, which that lady was most desirous to obtain. Curiosity of a most despicable kind had actuated Miss Plimpton in making the enquiry; and she was abundantly mortified by its gratification, for she felt there was too great a distance between Mrs. Rochford's circle and hers, for her to venture to call at her house, with any hope of the visit being returned; and she had too much pride to be received in it as the visitor of the humble companion of its lofty mistress.

The

The well-known *hauteur* of the Darlington family, kept, indeed, all Miss Neville's former acquaintance from paying her that attention which would, in some have been the ebullition of benevolence; but in the case of Miss Plimpton, a malevolent desire to see that haughty spirit subdued, who could throw off her lover with the same ease that another would have lain by an old garment.

Miss Plimpton, though an only daughter of opulent parents, commanding, as it were, the addresses of a number of gentlemen, who visited at her father's house, had the misfortune *never* to be *addressed.* She was young, well shaped, tolerably pretty, wore expensive dresses, and attended balls, both public and private, always in the parties of respectable people, by whom she was introduced to genteel men for partners.

What then could be the cause of the neglect she experienced? one of my juvenile friends is ready to ask. I will satisfy you, my dear, and hope the example of Miss Plimpton will deter you from like practices. Besides the personal advantages already enumerated, this lady had many precious gifts from nature. Her perceptions were quick, and her memory retentive; with a trifling degree of application she might have been a mistress of languages, though from inattention she neither wrote her own grammatically, or spoke it elegantly. To praise another woman in her hearing was a crime, which she never forgave even in her greatest favourite, nor was her volubility of expression ever exerted to such advantage, as when descanting on the foibles and imperfections of those of her own sex, whose good qualities or personal attractions were acknowledged by the other.

To

To nip in the bud growing partiality, to break off a match, or sow seeds of discord between a young couple already linked together by the silken cords of Hymen, were to her glorious harvests, and which, in too many cases, she reaped abundantly. While she marred the enjoyments of others, she neither contributed to increase her own stock or had the power of conciliating any person's affections. The men despised, and the women hated her, while by her address she always found access to new circles, where she disseminated her poison till her artifices were detected; sometimes they carried a visible mortification in their train, but no warning-voice reached to the heart of Miss Plimpton, as insensible was she to the noble forbearance practised by some, whose domestic peace she had laboured without effect to destroy.

Thus by a perversion of talent, bestowed for a very different purpose, did this young woman run the risk of incurring a punishment more severe than that of the unprofitable servant in the Gospel, who had simply buried his in a napkin, instead of using it for the basest of purposes, that of sowing dissension among friends and lovers.

Miss Neville, on the commencement of her acquaintance with this dangerous character, was disposed to give her credit for possessing *many* virtues, and *some* accomplishments. The want of congeniality on certain points, soon visible to the eye of discernment, made the former in an early stage of it reject the advances of the latter to intimacy, while she received her with a politeness of which she could not complain. The first opportunity that occurred for her wounding the feelings of Miss Neville, has

has been related in a former Chapter, as well as the effects produced by her information. Most innocently did she in her turn mortify Miss Plimpton, by engrossing the attentions of Mr. Athersey, with whom she had some slight acquaintance, and had not the smallest doubt, that but for the entrance of the fair West Indian, she would on that memorable night have had the honour of leading down the dance with him.

After this detail, does it occasion any surprise to my fair friends, that such a woman should, like the spider, weave the web to catch others, which in time must destroy herself?

Removed with the family into Sussex, Constantia in breathing the pure air of the country, inhaled health, and found peace in every breeze. Ever alive to the impressions which a virtuous mind receives from contemplating the beau-

ties of nature, she could not let her eyes rest on the azure vault above, without recollecting that he who first pointed out to her the course of the heavenly bodies was now mouldering into dust. "It was he also," she would say, "who taught me that religion was not* "a reverie of childhood." Thus in sober seriousness, without having recourse to visionary sources of delight, I dare to look up to the Author of all, believing that insignificant and unworthy as I am, while I strive to merit his protection I shall receive it. What an imputation upon man in his cultivated state, is the as-

* I pause again, breathless, to trace with renewed delight, sentiments which entranced me, when, turning my humid eyes from the expanse below to the vault above, my sight pierced the fleecy clouds that softened the azure brightness; and imperceptibly recalling the *reveries of childhood*, I bowed before the awful throne of my *Creator, whilst on its footstool.*—Mary Wollstonecraft's Letters from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Letter VIII. page 94.

sertion

sertion of the benevolent St. Pierre, the perusal of whose works afford me such pleasure!

"It is amidst the luxury of Greece and Rome, in the bosom of the wealth of Indostan, of the pomp of Persia, of the voluptuousness of China, of the overflowing abundance of European capitals, that men first started up, who dared to deny the existence of a *Deity*. On the contrary, the houseless Tartars, the savages of America, continually pressed with famine, the Negroes without foresight, and without a police, the inhabitants of the rude climates of the north, such as the Laplanders, the Greenlanders, the Esquimaux, see Gods everywhere, even in a flint."

In her early rambles Miss Neville chose to be accompanied by the nurse and child, though when once got in the fields she strayed as fancy directed,

sometimes leaving them for an hour seated on the fragment of a rock, to rest from the fatigue which she did not herself experience. Half *her* day was expired, before the listless inactive mistress of the mansion chose to be visible.

The studies of natural objects not being adapted to the taste of *every* reader, and *all* requiring variety, I congratulate my youthful friends who have had the perseverance to wade through so much dullness, on being arrived at a period of my heroine's history, when some scenes, in which she makes a principal figure, are brought forward on the canvass, that in the description may afford entertainment, though they should have some difficulty in discovering the moral that lurks beneath the surface.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Each hath his game, and each pursues his own.

CREECH.

THE note of preparation now sounded through all the stately apartments of Normanton Lodge.

Decency no longer prescribed to Mrs. Rochford a garment of sables, inward *joy* rather than *sorrow* had reigned, nor, excepting to her father and mother, had she ever worn a semblance of grief. For the decorations of her principal rooms the lady was compelled to have recourse to the taste of her companion, all of which were to be fitted up with Eastern magnificence, for which display they were in some degree adapted, by the alterations and improvements

ments made in them by the former owner. In such a field who could let their inventive powers lie dormant, particularly when the entertainment to be given was a masquerade in the first style of elegance, to which not a person wearing a domino was to be admitted. Once in the life of Miss Neville she had been permitted to view, as a spectator, a *gala* given by a lovely duchess, who for many years presided in the circles of fashion, and who by her affability and good humour won all hearts, though at that time her grace stood rather too prominent as a supporter of the election of a friend.

The Coup d'œil on entering —— House, had so captivated the senses of Constantia, that she could at any time have given an exact description of the whole scene, expatiating on the particular beauties of every apartment. The *Gala* of the peeress in expectancy, was

to

to exceed all that had ever gone before. One would have imagined that the elements were to be enlisted in her service; much of the amusements of the evening depended on the calmness and dryness of the atmosphere, superb fireworks, to take their rise from the margin of a fine piece of water which would reflect their brilliancy, was a part of her plan, and many other things she devised, little calculated for the uncertain climate of England. The vivid colourings of youthful fancy indulged in the torrid zone, were now called into action. Constantia, ever ardent in her pursuits, and persevering in what she might undertake, was the prime mover of all. Mrs. Rochford, by her silly impatience, sometimes rouzed her to anger, at others, excited contempt. In her varying countenance these emotions of the mind were discoverable, luckily for the preservation of dignity on both sides, Mrs. Rochford was no studier of looks,

looks, and Miss Neville knew when to bite the lip and be silent.

The expectation of a royal visitor, at that time a frequent resident on the sea-coast of Sussex, and whose arrival any where was the signal for an assemblage of rank and fashion, induced many of Mrs. Rochford's acquaintance to take journeys to the various bathing places in the neighbourhood, on purpose that they might have the honour of a card of invitation from her. Large and commodious as the house was, the rooms were converted to such a variety of purposes on the present occasion, that not many visitors could have been accommodated with beds, and as all were to be in character, few would have chosen to undress where their real ones must be displayed.

Mr. Rochford, during the whole of the preparations, saw very little of either his

his wife or her guest; indeed the army of workmen, painters, florists, &c. who took possession of his house, made it a very unfit place to live in. He therefore seldom slept at home, nor did his absence excite any surprise, Brighton, to which he generally rode, being then overflowing with company, and very attractive.

The day (or rather night) at last arrived. Mrs. Rochford had never taken the trouble to ask Miss Neville how she meant to array herself, concluding that she would officiate as her *double*, of course that she would appear in her own character. This her fair assistant had positively determined not to do, and notwithstanding all her avocations, had privately prepared a dress which she thought would effectually, disguise her; in the gaiety of her heart, promising herself no little pleasure from contemplating the scene; without a mask, she knew

knew she would be exposed to the ribaldry of every fool present, while deprived of the power of making them feel their own insignificance.

"Well," says Mrs. Rochford, as she joined Miss Neville, "this is the way I am served, why there's that fool Carter, has broke his leg by the branch of one of the trees giving way when he was fixing the lamps that are to shew the transparent painting; I suppose I shall have his wife and children come yelping here to-morrow, as if I could help his carelessness."

Constantia forgetting herself, "begged to know what care had been taken of the poor man."

"I am sure I can't tell, but I suppose there are people enough to attend to him, without either you or I mounting a horse to ride over the country for a surgeon

geon to set his leg; here comes George, perhaps he can give you the wished-for information; for my part, I have enough to do to mind my own affairs."

As Mr. Rochford entered at one door, his wife departed at the other; Constantia's countenance giving strong indications that all was not at peace within, Mr. Rochford, with great tenderness, enquired what had happened to give her pain. Simply relating the accident which had befallen the poor man, she repeated the enquiry whether proper assistance had been afforded.

"Set your heart at rest on that score, Miss Neville, for I have myself left the groupe with the surgeon of the next town, who was at hand, to set the bone; he says it is a simple fracture, and the poor fellow will soon be on his legs again; I have, besides engaging to reward him properly for his attendance, given

given the needful to the man's wife, and I hope no reflection of so melancholy a nature as the first hearing of the accident must have given rise to, will cloud the festivities of this evening. You, who have been so long kept from she sight of your friends, should not meet them like an April day; I trust you have no hidden cause of uneasiness; none occasioned by your residence here?" In saying the last words, his eyes were fixed on her's with the most scrutinizing earnestness, as if he wished to penetrate to the inmost recesses of her soul. Constantia turned away her head, striving in vain to check the pearly current which suffused her cheeks, while she faintly articulated thanks for the intelligence received, declaring, that she had no anxieties that could not be traced to one source.

She then withdrew to her own apartment, to meditate on the events of the morning,

morning, and to conjecture on those by which the evening would be distinguished. The unkindness of Mrs. Rochford to herself, was entirely absorbed by the recollection of her unfeeling speech respecting the carpenter; the benevolence displayed in the conduct of her husband, made Constantia again wish that he had a wife of a disposition more congenial to his own. The last touches to her dress being now completed, she had scarcely time to lay it by when she heard Mrs. Rochford's voice begging admittance. With a face drest in smiles, she hoped her dear friend had not for a moment imagined it could be her wish to controul her inclinations; to be sure she was much indebted to her ingenuity and taste for the brilliant appearance of every thing, and if wearing a mask would be more gratifying to her than being drest without one, she ought to please herself. This apology appeased the dignity of the person

person to whom it was made, without inspiring confidence, the object of the visit was therefore defeated, which was simply this, to learn the habiliments that were to be worn for the evening; the one chose not to communicate her intentions, for fear of its being construed into a peace-offering, and the other found that her consequence would be lessened by her enquiring what those were. Mrs. Rochford, with the assumed indifference of a petted child who does not choose to pout for what it is morally certain is beyond its reach, determined, that she would *not* know Miss Neville's dress before she appeared, that she might show her sagacity in discovering the wearer, which she doubted not would be no difficult task.

Miss Neville appearing late in the evening in her usual dress of white muslin, made Mr. Rochford and the family entertain

entertain no suspicions of the reality, while the lady who was entrusted with only half a secret, most religiously kept what, if entire, would have been far too great a burthen.

In some degree referring to her own situation as a wanderer in a strange land, depending on casual connections for support and shelter, Constantia first thought of personating a pilgrim, and she was still further strengthened in the idea, when, on trying the dress, she observed the sandals instead of shoes took so much from her height, that there was little chance of her being recognised. The old grey suits made use of in half mourning, served for the jacket and petticoat, and the plain simple hat, crook, &c. were by her ingenuity soon contrived out of other articles in her possession. Watching an opportunity when a large party of visitors were crossing

crossing the hall which led to the saloon, Constantia gliding from the retreat she had chosen, mingled in their train, and was soon lost amid the splendour of fancy-dresses and blaze of light which shone every where.

Fortunately she escaped notice till the hurry of her spirits had in some degree subsided. Sitting in a corner, as if rapt in meditation, she was accosted by a poet, who profest to be crossed in love, since which period he declared he had been resolving to turn Catholic, and if the fair pilgrim would but consent to teach him the mysteries of her religion, he would walk barefoot with her to any part of the world, or submit to any penance she chose to inflict."

"I am but a novice myself, good sir, and stand in need, perhaps, of more instruction than you do; when I have fulfilled my vows and returned from my pilgrim-

pilgrimage, perchance I may bestow some of the information I acquire by the way upon you; but pray how came you to lose your mistress?"

"By a very strange cause, I was busied in composing sonnets that I meant should rival those of Petrarch, and I could not celebrate the charms of *my* Laura, without painting her equally severe with his. She was disgusted with my not describing her as a mere mortal woman, when she knew she was so, and out of pique ran off with a tall officer of the Life-guards. I was obliged to rewrite my verses, which are now addressed to Sacharissa; if you will personate her, I doubt not that the effusions of my muse will make as distinguished a figure in the annals of literature, as those of Della-Crusca."

"But, sir," replied the fair Pilgrim, (who had almost forgotten the character

she was personating) "I have not the votive talent of either Anna-Matilda, or Laura-Maria, your muse could not inspire an answer to your strains."

"Leave that to me, my pretty one, I have replies and impromptus ready cut and dry, which I will print, to shame the rogues of booksellers, who complain of the heaviness of my verses, because they never read them."

The conversation was here broken off by the Pilgrim's rising from her seat to mingle in the crowd which assembled round a Harlequin and Columbine that were dancing an allemande. When this was over, she accosted a *petite* figure, attired as Jenny Gray, the fineness of whose dress and delicate form, indicated that she was of a rank in life superior to that of the wife of *Auld Robin*. Poor Jenny had never been north of the Tweed, and knew no dialect but that

that of St. James's; she was quite uncertain as to her own state, for sometimes she was a widow, at others a wife, and always indifferent to the fate of Jamie, whom the Pilgrim naturally asked, if she had left her native wilds in search of? Tired of such inanity, and the eternal squeaking of "*I know you,*" and "*Don't you know me?*" the pilgrim directed her steps to a room where she knew the company would be regaled by exquisite music, and fancied, from her knowledge of the recesses, she could glide into one and sit unobserved.

Here then one sense was completely gratified; the poor Pilgrim forgot that she was an inabitant of this transitory world. The melody found its way to her heart, she shed tears, but they were the offspring of calm delight. Recollecting her situation, she endeavoured to rouze herself, and was going to quit

the seat, when a deep-drawn sigh from behind the pillar, against which she had rested her head, made her suddenly turn to discover from whence it had issued. A man, habited as a Pilgrim, then came forward, requesting with a tremulous accent to be the partner of her journey; while he observed, there was danger in listening to such strains, when they could fascinate two people, who ought to have no resting-place till their vows were performed at the shrine of devotion. In saying these words, he put the arm of the Pilgrim under his; a noisy waggoner with his whip having sent the crowd to the place where they were standing, and so rudely did they push against each other, that our fair wanderer found the support of her brother pilgrim very seasonable.

The company having formed a country-dance in the great room, Master Pilgrim

Pilgrim proposed to his companion, that they should banish the seriousness inspired by the music above stairs, in footing it *featly round.* A compliance to this request according with her wishes, they soon joined the motley groupe, and after having concluded the dance, the extreme heat requiring some refreshment, the fair lady was a little puzzled how to take any, without removing her mask and her partner seeing her face, his politeness, however, soon relieved her embarrassment, for, presenting her with a glass of negus, he vanished from her sight. Little imagining this politeness to proceed from a desire of concealment on his part, the Pilgrim was much flattered by such respectful attention, and not a little vexed at being joined by a Highlander, who claimed her for a partner in a reel, which he was sure by her footing in *Moni-musk,* she could dance with great spirit. The proof already

given of her ability, in a manner deprived the lady of the power to refuse; she stood up, and having excellent support in the Highlander and his party, the reel was performed to the admiration of the company, who left their own dance to look at theirs. The good sense and spirited conversation of the Caledonian, called into action the mental powers of his fair partner, who was as animated in her replies as she had been in the dance. He drew her towards the room where refreshments were distributed, when taking off his own mask, he humbly intreated her to favour him by withdrawing her's.

Before she could make any excuse for refusing his request, or consider whether there was an impropriety in granting it, a deep sigh, like that which had awakened her from her reverie in the music-room, smote her ear, and she saw her old friend, the Pilgrim,

grim, darting with hurried steps into the crowd. The Scotchman observed that she was looking more towards her former partner than to him, while he respectfully held her hand, hoped he had not unintentionally infringed on the right of another; for so much intelligence and vivacity must, ere this night, have made its election for life. I may, however, if I am permitted to know who I have the honour of addressing, possibly be allowed the privilege of an acquaintance, much shall I grieve if ours terminate at the masquerade."

As Mr. Neville's daughter, the inhabitant of her father's house, Constantia would have had no scruple in declaring who she was, though she would first have learned the name and designation of the person who made the request; resolving to be silent as to her own, she could express no desire to be

informed of his. Her reply therefore was, "that though withheld by no engagements, her present mode of life not admitting her to enlarge the circle of her friends, it could not, consequently, be any gratification declaring her name or displaying her features."

"I must bow (replacing his mask) to the decree, while prodigal like, I erect altars to an unknown deity, who, I may flatter myself, will sometime or other receive the incense placed on them, though she at present veils herself from the worship of her adorer. Shall we adjourn to the cotillion-room? I am told there is to be a quadrille danced there in the first style."

The propriety of manners and pertinent observations of her new acquaintance, reminded her of the society she used to meet in Bloomsbury-square; that he was merely a *fashionable*, she could

could not believe, the sparkling intelligence of his eye and the expression of his countenance, had caught her attention, though under the disguise of the blue bonnet; the peculiarity of dress only served to set off his figure, and the agility and grace of his movements made him an excellent representative of a son of the mountains.

While the dance was performing, the conversation was kept up with great spirit on both sides: it was suddenly interrupted by a mask in the dress of an Old Highland Woman, who insisted on Saunders dancing a strathspey with her, "*to shew they folk that Moggie could lay by her spinning wheel and frisk it wi' the best o'.*" This challenge of skill could not be declined, though the "bonnie lad" gave up with a very ill grace his young lowland lass for an auld highland wife; so that had not her height proclaimed her to be a man in

woman's clothes, the muscular strength of which strong proofs were given, would soon have decided it.

Once more did Miss Neville find the Pilgrim by her side, "Fair damsel," he began, "I was sorry to see you in such close conference with a follower of Calvin, he will draw you from the right faith, listen to my counsel: I observe, young lady," continued he, when they were withdrawn from the crowd, "you are a stranger here; that young man who personates a highlander, is a noted gambler, he is remarked for his elegance in dancing and skaiting, his name will be familiar to you when you recollect the picture at the exhibition of the Royal Academy, of a handsome young man in black in the attitude of skaiting; beware of trusting your name to such a character." "And, pray sir," said Constantia, dropping her assumed tone of voice, while she mourned in secret that

her late partner made so vile a use of his abilities, "how came you to be interested in my concerns; am I really known to you?"

"Yes, loveliest of women, you are, and but for one cruel barrier you would have long since seen me at your feet. It may not, however, always exist, then shall I lay this garb aside, then may this beating heart know peace."

In saying these words, he gently drew the hand of his fair companion across his breast; she was confounded at discovering the violence of emotion that seemed to shake the frame of the speaker, nor did the clammy dew on the hand which detained hers, escape observation; unable to reply, she drew it suddenly away, attempting to rise, which she found impossible, unless she had consented to leave part of her garments behind."

" Forgive me, fairest lady, be assured I shall not again offend, only promise me you will not bestow any more of your attention on that insinuating Scot, who is so truly unworthy of receiving it."

Letting go her clothes, he rose quickly, leaving Miss Neville perplexed in thought; "a cruel barrier divides me from a man who adores me, who is solicitous to preserve me from improper acquaintance, and who yet wraps himself up in impenetrable darkness, what can all this mean? It is, doubtless, a tragedian from one of the theatres, who taking advantage of my ignorance, which he soon discovered from my simpleness of speech, strives to break in upon the pleasures of the entertainment; what a simpleton, to believe he knew me, without desiring him to tell me my name; I'll find him though, and turn the tables upon him, by declaring

claring which of the votaries of Melpomene I think him to be; if he denies that he is, I shall insist on his telling me his real name, and how he came to know me."

"Whither so fast, my dear?" says an honest Jack Tar, whom she encountered by the way, "you are the little lass that was dancing so briskly away just now; what have you done with Sawney, is he gone *o'er the muir among the hether?* he should have taken you with him. Here's Heart of Oak at your service, sound wind and limb, no crazy timbers; come, cheer up, perhaps you can bear a bob in the chorus of, Rule Britannia. I always sings best when my sweetheart is by, and you shall be mine if you are not laid-to in the port of matrimony; no foul play with the frigate of a mess-mate, let land-lubbers do that, all above-board work with us true Sons of Neptune."

Resistance

Resistance being vain, the Pilgrim was obliged to remain while the sailor sung the first verse of "Rule Britannia," which he executed in so masterly a style, as to draw round him a groupe, who joining in chorus, intreated him to favour the company with more of the same, or another song.

The Pilgrim found herself more conspicuously placed than was agreeable to her feelings; for the first time discovering the ill effects of her secrecy, as had she belonged to any party, some of them would have kept an eye on her motions, and been ready to extricate her from difficulties like the present. A Lady Abbess coming up, she ventured to claim her protection, who with great kindness accorded it, insisting that as a child of the church, a British sailor was guilty of piracy in attempting to detain her. Full of gratitude for her rescue, and not a little pleased

pleased with the dignified manner of her protectress, the Pilgrim begged permission to remain with her, which she readily granted, asking her at the same time to take a walk in the garden, as she had not seen the transparent paintings, nor the temple dedicated to Flora, which she heard was illuminated with uncommon brilliancy.

Constantia most eagerly accepted the offer, as she had been long wishing to perambulate without doors, but durst not attempt it for want of a female companion. In explaining the devices and designs of the paintings, the lady-abbess soon discovered that her guide was thoroughly acquainted with her subject, and not a little gratified that the execution was so universally approved. "Forgive the question, my dear, but are you not the West Indian who resides with Mrs. Rochford, if you are, and wish to conceal yourself from

from others, be assured, I will not betray the confidence reposed in me ?"

To such a question, who could reply evasively?

"Since I know it is Miss Neville that I am addressing, suffer me to enquire, if you find your abode here to your liking; it is not often that residing with a young married couple is the pleasantest life in the world."

Constantia, though open in one particular, was here on her guard, "I should be very ungrateful to my friends, madam, if I could be insensible to their kindness."

"Pardon, my dear young lady, my freedom; but be assured it was not to gratify idle curiosity that I drew you aside from the company; I respect your father's character, and lament the misfortunes

fortunes that overpowered him; many there are who would be proud to receive his daughter under their protection, so do not think Mrs. Rochford singularly kind; her attentions to you, if invariably the same, prove that she is sensible of your value, but there is no great exertion of benevolence in contributing to our own entertainment."

The Poet now interrupted the *tête a tête*, requesting to *beau* the ladies to see the fireworks that were just going to be played off. Constantia delighted to find herself with any person who knew her father, made no scruple of taking one arm of the votary of the muses, when she observed the lady abbess had accepted of the other. A weird sister now stopped their progress, and insisted on looking at the lines of the Pilgrim's hand, offering to tell her fortune gratis, though from the others she would have nothing less than gold, if they wished

wished to pry into futurity. The poet did not choose to leave the young lady for the old one, and the latter was determined to get a good place for seeing the fireworks; some of her acquaintance passing by at the moment, she joined them, while her fair companion was so absorbed in listening, she never observed that the party was lessened.

"Truly, young lady," says the ancient Beldame, "I am sorry to tell you that you have been in very bad company to-night; I cannot tell how many base sordid hands have touched this palm."

"That may be likely enough, old Dame, for I danced a country-dance, and I recollect you seized my hand more than once rather roughly."

"Do not break your jests upon me, I mean not the hands of women; here has been much pressing of these fingers;

gers; but beware of those you have spoken with to-night, some are deep plotters, they may notwithstanding be discovered. You have gone through a great deal of trouble, and seen foreign parts; till you have travelled again, you will not be settled; mind what I say, think not of Dunsinane, nor Birnam Wood, though you were to see the Thane of Cawdor. Hubble bubble, toil and trouble."

Saying these words, and twirling her stick, as if stirring the cauldron, she flew off, leaving the Pilgrim in still greater amazement than before; how almost every person she conversed with should be so familiar with her history, was a mystery hardly to be solved, a sky-rocket rising most majestically in the air, recalled to her mind that from the temple of Flora the whole scene on the water would be viewed to the best advantage, and she doubted

doubted not that she would there meet parties taking the advantage of shelter from the night-air, while both eyes and ears were regaled; boats with wind-instruments being stationed at proper distances, beautifully decorated and illuminated. Walking thither the Poet was silent.

As soon as they were arrived at the porch of the temple, the Pilgrim rallied him on his gravity, which however she promised to pardon, if he confessed he had been invoking the aid of Apollo and the Nine, to celebrate the wonders of the evening, and the praises of their host and hostess, for their liberal entertainment."

"I have been reflecting, rather," he replied, "on the predictions of Dame Hecate; Who can she be, have you not, my charming Pilgrim, found *me* out?"

The

The tones of the voice now seemed familiar to her ear; surely it is Mr. Rochford himself.

"Yes, your conjecture is right; but pray, under whose protection have you been during the evening. Mrs. Rochford knows my dress, and has enquired frequently about you; if you have any reason for not wishing to disclose that you have been in the habit of a Pilgrim, be advised by me, go into the house and attire yourself, as you usually are; you will, before the supper-rooms are thrown open, have an opportunity of joining Lady Darlington's party, and being placed at the table with her. Your secresy on the subject of your dress, so inconsistent with your usual openness, has awakened suspicions in Mrs. Rochford's mind, which she has not yet communicated to her mother; your appearance will banish what your absence would confirm."

The

The friendliness of the latter part of this speech, in some measure, atoned for the freedom of the first; Constantia was about to tear her mask from her face to prove that she had no *motives* for concealment, when she recollected the gambler under the mask of the Highlander, who would then recognize her as his real partner, of whom the *Weird Sister*, in *her* ambiguous language, and the Pilgrim, in *plain terms*, had warned her to beware; requesting Mr. Rochford to see her safe to the private staircase that led to the bedchambers, she tripped *from* the Temple more quickly than she had *to* it, reaching her own apartment without meeting any person by the way.

Mortified beyond measure at the insinuations of Mr. Rochford, Constantia for the first time knew what it was to encounter self-reproach; but for the absolute necessity which there seemed

to

to exist for her appearing in *propria persona*, she would willingly have gone to bed instead of dressing for supper. The heat of the mask had given to her complexion such a tincture of red, she could not endure to look at herself in the glass; tears of vexation did not add to the lustre of her eyes. The pure white muslin, and jet necklace, earings, &c. gave a little softness to the picture; she descended into the drawing-room, hoping there to find some of the company who had joined the party *unmasked;* all was silent. Mr. Rochford met her as she was coming out, also in his own character; while he gallantly led her down stairs, he said the ladies would not thank her for *unveiling* charms that would eclipse theirs.

Constantia, unused to such compliments from Mr. Rochford, felt that the mystery in which from mere playfulness she

she had chosen to envelope herself for a few hours, was likely to make on the minds of others an impression very different to what she could have imagined, most bitterly did she regret that she had *done* what could not be *undone*; though too much hurt to attempt a defence, by explaining her motives for not wishing to act the part required of her by Mrs. Rochford, as well as her entertaining no idea that there could be an impropriety in mixing in a company held in the house where she lived, every recess of which she was so thoroughly acquainted with, and where, if any insult had been offered, so many persons were on the spot whose protection she could instantly have claimed.

These meditations were interrupted by Lady Darlington's expressing no small degree of satisfaction at meeting her in perfect health; for the general opinion

opinion entertained by the intimates of the lady of the house, was, that indisposition had kept her from making one of the party.

Constantia, somewhat reassured by this reception, was also gratified that her ladyship held by her arm, while she took the tour of the rooms. In looking for her former acquaintance, she was not a little pleased that none of them recognised her as the Pilgrim; the *Weird Sister* scowled at her as she passed, without speaking. The Highlander seemed to consider her with attention, but as an entire stranger; indeed what with heels, train, and nodding plumes, she seemed some inches taller than in her former habit. The Pilgrim, whose singular manner of accosting her had awakened curiosity, was not to be distinguished; he had either put on another dress or departed. The sailor was not yet tired of singing,

nor the company of hearing him, though the attention of every part of it was in a great measure attracted towards a *Jerry Sneak*, who kept up his part with great spirit, to the no small risk of his lungs, in vociferating for the *vicked* Major, who had carried Mrs. Sneak off in his *viskey*, and nobody could tell *ven* she would be brought back. A handsome young man, dressed as a French fine lady, was also an excellent character; hiding the blushes excited by the compliments she received behind a rose-coloured fan, which she occasionally flirted in the faces of those who ridiculed the frippery of her dress. Jerry Sneak and this lady went down a country dance together with so many airs and graces, as to excite the risibility of all who viewed them.

There were besides, Nuns who had never heard a convent bell toll, and ghostly fathers who could not confer a bene-

a benediction on those who solicited it. Turks who scarcely knew that the Russians and their countrymen had opposite interests, or that the Empress Catharine had endeavoured to drive them out of Europe. Spanish ladies with guittars, most elegantly dressed according to the style of the country, who never had read of a fandango, or could play a tune fit to be heard. A Wowski attired *a la caractere*, who if she had ever read the play, or seen it represented, knew not how to utter a sentence in character. In short, mistakes of this nature were so numerous, as to remind the spectator of the scene in Harlequin Touchstone, when the bishops are discovered playing at leapfrog, and other personages equally *out* of *character*.

In the *interlude* now to be performed, all appeared ambitious of distinguishing themselves. The long tables, bending under a profusion of delicacies, were

soon filled, and the admiration excited by the fancy and elegant taste that pervaded the whole, very shortly gave way to a desire of demolishing all before them; Solomon's temples, and Diana and her nymphs, meeting with as little respect as snowy hens and chickens on seas of amber. But for the check Miss Neville's spirits had received from Mr. Rochford, she would have wished herself in her Pilgrim's habit, to enjoy the conviviality and sprightly conversation which seemed to reign everywhere but at the table where she was placed; that being reserved for the Right Honourables that chose to unmask and mix with the select friends of the hostess and her mother, who, about twelve in number, had been mere spectators of the masquerade. Mrs. Rochford was so delighted to see her claims to celebrity so well substantiated by the company at *her* table proving so numerous and splendid,

splendid, both as to title and fashion, that she had forgot her surmises about Constantia's absence, who, in truth, by her unwearied efforts to entertain and accommodate the guests during supper, was fully entitled to her thanks.

As all pleasures are fleeting, and the utmost ingenuity cannot protract enjoyment, the hour of departure at length arrived; the difficulty of getting the carriages up for so numerous an assembly, made it extremely late before the house was cleared; many a secret the day-light divulged, most of the company making use of their own equipages, it required little penetration to discern which member of a family had personated such a character.

Worn out with fatigue, all who remained under Mr. Rochford's roof were soon in the arms of Morpheus; nor till Sol had performed half his course next

day, were any of them stirring to trace the devastations a few hours amusement had occasioned. The playing off the fireworks had burnt and destroyed a beautiful clump of trees, planted on an eminence at no great distance from the water. Sweet-scented and flowering shrubs were stripped of their honours, while the grass looked as if it had endured the baleful effects of the blighting *Siroch*. The beautiful flowers, which flourished luxuriantly round the temple of Flora, were trodden down; in some instances torn up by the roots.

Constantia, who was the first to make the survey, moralized as she walked to an arbour, her favourite seat, where she often brought her work, or her book, to sit and enjoy the fragrance of the morning air when she did not chuse to stray farther from home. This was desolation itself; the jessamines that used

used to scent the air were now scattered to the winds; the violence evidently used to destroy this sweet retreat, created suspicions in the mind that some enemy to the family had taken advantage of the confusion of the preceding evening, and committed depredations from mere wantonness; going farther, these were confirmed by finding branches of fruit-trees strewed across the walks, on which hung in clusters apples and pears barely formed. The shrubbery was cut to pieces, and on looking through a gate that opened into the orchard, the lopped trees that met her view, reminded her of the havock which an army of enraged soldiers might have been supposed to make on departing from a place where they had been treacherously dealt by.

Grieved at reflecting on what she had witnessed, her air, when she entered the breakfast-room, where sat

Mr. and Mrs. Rochford, expressed but too forcibly what passed within. The lady was gloriously out of humour with herself and every body she saw; for in her way to her apartment the night before, she had discovered that a mirror of great value was utterly destroyed, no person could tell by what means. Rochford appeared to sit uneasily, while he omitted to offer a chair to Constantia, an exertion of politeness which he had hitherto appeared to think indispensable. After the usual salutations of, "Good morning," a dead silence ensued; Mrs. Rochford leaning her head on her hand, beating the tattoo with her feet, with great violence. "At last," says Mrs. Rochford, "upon my word, I suppose the people expected I was to have an ox roasted whole upon the lawn, and barrels of beer for their servants to swill till they were dead drunk; fine rioting we should have had if I had been fool enough to comply with their demands;

demands; why, I suppose twenty buttocks of beef, and liquor in proportion, would scarcely have satisfied all the servants in waiting."

In the twinkling of an eye Constantia discerned the cause of the depredations on the grounds.

"I believe," says Mr. Rochford, with provoking calmness, "you would have laid out your money to advantage, if you had provided for satisfying the appetites of the out-door visitants with but a fourth of the profusion which was expended on the tables of those within; some hundred pounds will not repay the damages the property has sustained, besides our being made the laughing-stock of the whole county, for the joke will be a standing one; in London, let a man or woman make themselves ever so ridiculous, the recital of the adventure is listened to but

for a few days, some other equally interesting being brought forward to public observation." After a pause, " the *Sussex Masquerade*, and its consequences, will be an everlasting topic at the libraries of Brighton, Hastings, &c.; if one could disguise themselves so as not to be known, the various opinions sported on the occasion would be a little amusing. What say you, Miss Neville, shall I drive you over in my curricle to-morrow; it will be more amusing than staying here?"

Mrs. Rochford could restrain herself no longer, she sobbed aloud, violent hysterics agitated her whole frame; poor Constantia, who knew not what hysterical affections were, thought the globe rising in the throat to be symptomatic of approaching dissolution, and notwithstanding some hard blows she received, rendered every possible assistance. Mr. Rochford endeavoured

to

to allay her fears, by telling her is was merely a fit of passion, and must have its course; adding, he would stay till he saw her likely to recover, when her own maid had better be summoned to attend her; for his part, he should then take his horse and ride across the country to keep out of her way, he had little doubt that her resentment at what he had said, would not readily subside. To judge of our heroine's feelings on being present at such a scene, the party must have lived in their own family as free from domestic broils as she had done, and at the same time as little acquainted with the various methods practised by women in giving vent to their wayward humours.

Excepting on the stage, when a celebrated actress, now as much distinguished for her high rank, as before for pre-eminent abilities, performed the

part of Mrs. Oakley, nothing like it had ever been exhibited to the wondering eyes of Miss Neville. After the whirlwind of passion has expended its fury, how weak and feeble does it leave the poor frail tenement in which it has been long pent up. A less gentle and forgiving spirit than Constantia, must have sympathised with distress like that which now assailed Mrs. Rochford; for who, that has a heart to feel, can see a fellow-créature in agony of pain, and remember that any part of it has been brought upon them by her own folly.

The exclamations, "I shall die if I am not laid on the sofa!" terrified the servants, who, however, hastened to obey her orders, while Constantia flew rather than ran to the stables, to stop Mr. Rochford, that he might be apprized of the necessity of procuring medical assistance. She was lucky in finding

ing him just mounted on his horse, and in conversation with the surgeon, who had called most opportunely to visit the poor carpenter, whose leg he had set the preceding day. Rouzed by this appeal to his humanity, the sarcastic husband forgot his resolution to absent himself, intreating Mr. Sanguine to accompany him to the house.

Too soon was it discovered that Mrs. Rochford's situation required ease and rest, instead of the fatigue of body and mind which she had for many days undergone; and so certain was she of the disapprobation that she would have had to encounter from her mother, had she known of her being in the family way, that she carefully concealed from every person that she was so. After suffering most severely for her imprudence, she lost her child, which to make the mortifications still more severe, was a boy. This *malheur*, was a terrible blow upon

the grandfather, who with most hearty good-will, wished the first inventor of masquerades at the devil.

Had Mrs. Rochford been of a more vindictive temper than she really was, or had Miss Neville, in sober seriousness, given her any cause of offence, the affectionate attention which the latter now displayed, the patient cheerfulness with which she watched returning health, and the various methods which she adopted to beguile the lassitude and weariness confinement necessarily occasions, must have excited affection, and banished resentment. Mr. Rochford, by his conduct, plainly shewed to an accurate observer, that his wife had not the power of giving him either pleasure or pain. He was attentive from a motive of duty, but there were no spontaneous marks of tender affection, nothing that sprang from the heart and was restrained from utterance, lest a de-

a delicate ear might be wounded; all the tender epithets in his vocabulary were as current before strangers as in the seclusion of domestic privacy. Miss Neville would sometimes whisper to herself, "Not such a husband did my father make."

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Creatures of every kind but ours,
Will comprehend their natural powers,
While we, whom reason ought to sway,
Mistake our talents every day.

SWIFT.

RELEASED from her confinement, and able to walk over the grounds surrounding the house, Mrs. Rochford found to her sorrow, that what Mr. Rochford had sportively (and to torment her as she imagined) said of the damages they had sustained, was but too true; instead of seeing the error of her own conduct in not ordering some refreshment to be given at the porter's lodge to the attendants on the carriages, none being attainable for money at that hour of the night, and even in the daytime so great a number might have created

ated a scarcity, she inveighed most bitterly on the insolence that could expect to be fed at her cost. Miss Neville, to whom these complaints were made, was very cautious in her replies, while she endeavoured to preclude the necessity of making any, by diverting the conversation to another channel, and praising, as it deserved, the manner in which the evening's entertainment was conducted; in confirmation of her opinion, she added the testimony of all the company present, with whom she had conversed, who were unanimous in declaring that universal satisfaction was the result of such uncommon efforts to please.

"Apropos," continues Mrs. Rochford, "what came of you all the evening till the supper rooms were opened? I looked for you every where, without success; I began to think you had gone off, and told Rochford so, when I found he knew as little of you as I did."

"Gone

"Gone off, madam!" said Constantia, reddening with surprize and indignation, "Who did you suppose to be the companion of my flight? and pray who had I to *run from?* No person on this side the Atlantic has a right to controul my actions; I have, consequently, no motive for concealment."

"Why, I beg pardon, if my suspicions offend you, but how could I tell what connections you might have formed, and some people of an uncommon turn of thinking, like to do things differently from their neighbours; you might have chosen to have the *eclat* of an elopement on so memorable a night; it would have been much talked of, and doubtless, recorded in every news-paper that inserted any account of my masquerade."

"I am sorry," replied Miss Neville, "you could conceive, that to a love of fame

fame I should sacrifice all that is dear to woman, and that of so despicable a kind too. After residing for so many months under your roof, it was natural for me to imagine that you were acquainted with my principles, and would believe that the motives which influenced my conduct must be pure, though unexplained. I could not have been your deputy in the early part of the evening, without subjecting myself to attacks from various characters, to which it would have been impossible for me to reply. I had a desire to enjoy a masquerade, as it was an entertainment I never partook of before, and I might not again have such an opportunity of mixing in a crowd, where I felt myself, from various causes, perfectly at home. I was gratified at the moment, and still more so now, that I have so unexpectedly learned your real sentiments on a subject very interesting to my feelings; be assured I shall not

not require you to say more explicitly the little dependance you have on my stability or prudence; the sooner I sink into humble obscurity, the less shall I be exposed to mortifications which my early habits have not fitted me to endure."

While Miss Neville was thus firmly but temperately declaring her sense of the indignity offered to her, the person who had made so gross an attack, was by no means aware of what she had done; nor, till the conclusion of the last sentence, when the speaker turned from her apparently much agitated, did she imagine any apology on her part would be required. Wrapt up in her own importance, she stalked most majestically towards the house, forgetting, now that she was no longer an inhabitant of a sick chamber, the obligations she was under to those, who, regardless of their own health, had in a great

great degree accelerated the restoration of her's. One of Constantia's employments, since the masquerade, had been to water and tend the roots of the flowers round the temple of Flora, in the hope of seeing them restored to their pristine vigour and beauty, hither then she went, to seek in the calm of retirement and self-communion, that peace which waits not on tumultuous pleasures.

The day was uncommonly fine, the sun shone with more than usual brilliancy, the grass and the shrubs seemed to have recovered from the rough treatment they had received; the piece of water was unruffled, while its glassy surface appeared to reflect myriads of stars; beyond this, the eye rested on the downs; and to finish the picture, the wide ocean opened to the view. In gazing on the varied tints of the sky, never so beautiful nor so versatile any where as

on

on the sea-coast, she found all her youthful enthusiasm revive; the glimpses which she caught of distant sails, reminded her of early scenes, and the probability that a freight more precious in her sight than the gold of Ophir, would soon be borne on the bosom of the waters, tended to tranquillize her spirits, and to inspire fortitude.

"I ought not to be angry at Amelia for failing in those delicate attentions which she was never taught to think necessary. She judges of my actions by the interpretations which she has heard put upon those of others; perhaps under the same circumstances, I should have blamed another for what, in the simplicity of my heart, I did that evening; much as I desired to mix in the crowd unknown, I should, however, never have refused to declare either to her, or Mr. Rochford, the character I meant to

to assume, if they had questioned me on the subject."

Musing in this manner, as she sat with a book in her hand, the adventures of the evening (which had been nearly banished her remembrance by the dangerous illness of Mrs. Rochford so immediately succeeding) rose in review before her. The muscular figure of the Highlander; the agility and grace with which he moved; the full melodious tones of his voice; the good sense and sprightliness of his conversation; the sensibility which she had given him credit for possessing; and, last of all, his politeness in not pressing her to unmask when he found a compliance with his request disagreeable; all were at one glance recollected, only to awaken contempt, that such talents were prostituted at the midnight orgies of the gaming-table. The curses of the helpless victims, "not loud but deep,"

deep," whose fortunes have been sacrificed, perhaps too the lives of their parents, to support him in his iniquity, must sometimes assail his ears; when youth and strength shall fail, what will be the solace of his old age? Who could have believed "that deceit should steal such gentle shape, and with a vizor hide deep vice?"

In repeating the quotation from our immortal bard, Constantia found her meditations interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Rochford, who coming forward, begged to have a few minutes conversation with her; unable to assign any reason for wishing to decline speaking to him in private, Miss Neville was now upon her guard, lest she should feed the suspicions of Mrs. Rochford, by holding so immediately after their *brouillerie*, a conference with her husband, who, she was afraid, would conclude that it had been sought for by her,

her, on purpose to complain to him of her ill temper. She requested, therefore, he would be very brief, as it was now near the hour at which Mrs. Rochford had proposed taking a ride, and she would be displeased at her absence."

"Why, my dear Miss Neville, do you make yourself such a slave to her capricious humours? she is absolutely spoilt by your indulgence; there is now no possibility of getting a word from you. To deprive *some* women of the powers of speech, would be to make them tolerable companions, but to seal up *your* lips, who never open them without diffusing delight to your hearers, is the worst kind of sacrilege."

"It is time to begone, sir, when you think condemning my own sex a theme that will afford me entertaintainment."

"Tell me, my charming friend, what subject I may venture to introduce that will *not* excite displeasure? Shall we talk of philosophy, or suppose we discuss the merits of the author whose works you have been perusing? What are they, "The pleasures of imagination." The fittest study for a man who is deprived of all delights but what may be traced to that source; but for the *pleasures* of *imagination*, how could I bear the *tortures* of *reality?*" "This temple is inspiring, I perceive, Mr. Rochford," said Miss Neville, rising; "but recollect, you are neither the poet, nor am I Sacharissa. When you erect a building in this place, pray let it be on yonder mount, which I am told is called Parnassus. Thoughout of your grounds, it would be a fine object from hence; you might furnish it with pictures of living beauties, and christen them with the appellations by which the nine muses are distinguished; at the feet of these

these imaginary deities you might compose verses that would rival the sonnets of Pretrarch."

As she uttered these words she reached the threshold of the porch, when gaily turning, she kissed her hand, saying *jusqu'au sevoir*; leaving Rochford in a paroxysm of rage, at finding himself laughed at.

"That is a woman," after a long pause; "but a devilish clever one. She is, however, a woman, and therefore to be won, and have her I will, that I am determined upon. She has passions, for who can look at her without discovering that love laughs out at her eye, revels in her dimples, and sits buoyant on her coral lips. I must be more guarded when I am next alone with her, the look she gave me when she let the book drop out of her hand, as mine lay across her lap, while my eyes were

feasted on her rising blushes, can never be forgotten. But for that officious Highlander on the night of the masquerade, who I was afraid knew *me*, though I could not discover who *he* was, although I saw his face, I might in my Pilgrim's habit have drawn her to the garden, and lighted in her bosom a spark of this flame which devours me. So much coldness, and such self-possession, with so large a portion of sensibility and quickness of feeling, I never believed could exist in the same character; I must try to drive off my chagrin, by riding over to Brighton."

There, on the Stein, were assembled all that were the gayest of the gay, and the most celebrated of those who were aiming at celebrity. Mrs. Rochford, who appeared for the first time since her illness, was surrounded by *dear* friends, who rejoiced to see her look so well, though they had laughed to one

another at the recital of her distresses the day after the masquerade, to which was not inaptly imputed her subsequent confinement. Constantia, ever cheerful and animated when in society, was delighted with the moving scene before her, the music regaled her ears, while her eyes wandered over a multitude of objects, to trace the features of a countenance she knew. Mr. Athersey, who caught her eye, did not let many minutes pass, before he left the party he was with to join her's; he lamented when he did, "that his cruel stars had led him to Ashford Races, when he should have been in Sussex, to have had the honour of attending Mrs. Rochford's masquerade, which for brilliancy of invention and elegance of execution, was allowed to have excelled all that had ever gone before; in short, says he, to Mrs. Rochford, go where you would, 'twas the universal subject of discourse."

Not a little flattered by this speech, Mrs. Rochford asked Mr. Athersey if he would go home and dine with her, which invitation being acceded to, he became their escort to the various libraries. Miss Neville looked over the names in the subscription-book, while Mr. Athersey threw for a raffle, which Mrs. Rochford had put into on her first coming down; Miss Plimpton's was the only person of her acquaintance whom she recognised; on enquiring if she were still in Brighton, she was informed she had left it a few days before. Not far from Miss Plimpton's, she observed that of Luke De Eresby, without an address; the name made her start; not knowing to what kind of being it might belong, she feared to ask if the owner was in the room, though the question trembled on her tongue, and as she knew her early and much lamented friend had relations in England,

she

she thought it highly probable this gentleman was of the same family.

A lady now spoke to Mrs. Rochford, whose voice and figure reminded Miss Neville of the piece of still-life who attempted to personate Jenny Gray. "I vow and protest," said she, "I never saw characters so well supported at a masquerade in my life, the Scotch ones in particular;" I was quite vexed I had not thought of what I was to say, I only put on the dress as being a pretty one, and adapted to my figure. The old Highland woman, with the plaid about her head and shoulders, almost pulled my arm off, because I refused to dance a reel with her. The young man, her companion, was very polite, though he told me he was sure Auld Robin would have had no objection to my joining in innocent merriment; his countrymen being very liberal in the treatment of

their wives. Do you know who he was?"

Mrs. Rochford said she had been told it was the Laird of Calder. "Oh, no," replied Jenny, who proved to be Lady Selina Ormsby, "the Highlander was not so tall as he is by an inch or two; besides, I know the Laird and Lady C———, were not in this neighbourhood at the time."

Constantia, who had been all ear, as if determined not to lose a syllable, said diffidently, "I was informed that it was the celebrated skaiter, who wore the garb of his native country on that night."

"That I positively do not believe to be true," said Mr. Athersey, "for I saw him in London a few days ago; it was from him, and a set with him, that I had

I had the most of my information relative to the party here; they all named the characters they represented, and ——— without any restrictions to secresy, said he had worn the dress of a waggoner, and laughed heartily at the effects of his long whip in clearing the rooms when he chose to wave it." Constantia, without perceiving it, respired more freely, while she internally exclaimed, the Highlander, though unknown, I will pawn my life, is not a villain, or a gamester.

Mr. Rochford now joined the groupe, was pleased to see Miss Neville seemed to have forgotten the conversation of the morning; he chose to have as short a memory, and to be very gay to all. Lady Selina Ormsby, with her *Chaperone*, a widow lady, her aunt, being asked to join the dinner party by Mrs. Rochford, her husband learning that Mr. Ather-

sey was to ride over, picked up two or three other beaux to make the party more joyous.

Before we place them at dinner, it will be necessary to enquire what Miss Neville thought of Mr. Rochford's figurative language in the temple of Flora. That the husband of another woman should entertain a secret passion for her, was a surmise that could never enter the pure heart and virtuous mind which she possessed. She had observed with no small degree of shame, mingled with resentment, an occasional freedom of manners in Mr. Rochford, all which she dated from the night of the masquerade, and imputed to her own behaviour, having admitted of a construction most unfavourable to herself, probably indicating levity and folly, which were only restrained from shewing themselves at other seasons, for fear of not escaping censure. To express her

her feelings, she considered beneath her dignity, while her knowledge of the disposition of the man she had to deal with (who could not bear to be ridiculed) determined her to treat him in the manner we have seen. On meeting Mrs. Rochford, the latter with great kindness said, she hoped what she had mentioned in the morning would be forgotten, for it was only spoken in jest. She could have no intention to hurt the feelings of one so good to her, and who on all occasions was so ready to do her service; she was sometimes out of humour with herself, and then said what she was sorry for afterwards. Should Miss Neville ever be married, and plagued with the care of so large an establishment as she was, her fretfulness might not appear so extraordinary as it probably now did.

Acknowledgment from the offending party, always disarmed the resentments

of Miss Neville, she gave her hand as a pledge of forgiveness, and agreed to go to Brighton with Mrs. Rochford, who had been fearful of her consent; she could not have gone without her, she would look so deserted, for in a walk on the Stein, the nurse and child were not the fittest attendants for a lady of fashion; as to her husband, they were far too well bred to be seen in public together, unless it appeared an accidental meeting. One of her chief motives for asking the Honourable Mrs. Ormsby and Lady Selina to come home with her, was, that when she was disposed to lounge away a morning, she might call for the latter to accompany her, by which means she would be more independent of Miss Neville, who chose to be considered mistress of her own time till the hour of dinner, after that meal she was always with Mrs. Rochford.

The

The conversation at dinner consisted chiefly of a discussion of the merits of the various dishes of which it was composed, Mr. Athersey displayed his talents in a new light; he seemed to have fitted himself for becoming the purveyor of the Heir Apparent, and decided with great gravity on the superiority of turbot to any other fish; while some of the company descanted with equal ability on the superlative excellence of the Thames salmon. When the cloth was drawn, the fine flavour of the wines, the deliciousness of the fruits, &c. was another inexhaustible theme. Constantia, could not help recollecting the parties she had mixed in at her father's house, and comparing them with that to which she was now admitted. In Bloomsbury-square, if she were silent, her faculties were employed; instead of letting her thoughts wander to another scene for amusement, the sense of hearing was too highly gratified to permit

permit of her willingly missing a word. Here she was abstracted from society, by her unfitness to shine in it, for she had only *ate* to *live*, while her companions, it appeared, *lived* to *eat*. The signal for adjourning to the drawing-room, which formerly had broken in upon her enjoyments, was now obeyed with the most perfect satisfaction, as she hoped in conversing with Mrs. Ormsby, to find some relief from the dissertations on cookery, &c. which perforce she had been hearing.

Lady Selina accompanied Mrs. Rochford to her dressing-room, to view a collection of shells that had just been presented to her, while Mrs. Ormsby remained behind, on purpose to chat with Constantia. The benevolent and respectable aunt of Lady Selina had been particularly pleased with the manners of her new acquaintance at the library, and extremely desirous, on her

niece's account, that it should not end with the day. Lady Selina had lost her mother very early in life, without having the good fortune to have her place supplied by the tender attentions of any near female relation. A French governess had given her and an elder sister, now married, very flimsy notions of morality; of religion she was forbidden to speak, lest she should have a desire to make converts of them, her's being of the Catholic church, and her fair pupils, if they had any, of the Protestant as established by law; that is to say, they were Episcopalians.

The Earl, their father, was too much engrossed by his own amusements to keep a very watchful eye over either son or daughters. The latter were generally in town for the winter at his house in Cavendish-square, and who they received in it was more than he could tell. Their mother having died

in

in a consumption, and the eldest being threatened, as the physicians said, with pulmonary complaints, it was thought necessary to send both the sisters abroad, in the hope that a milder climate would restore the health of one, and that the journey and new scenes might be beneficial to both.

A son of Mars, alias a Colonel in the Guards, knew much better than all the tribe of Galen did, what ailed the Lady Olivia. He had, some months previous to her departure for the continent, become master of her affections, and it was only fear of rejection that withheld Colonel Tomlins from preferring his suit to the Earl. By an exertion of interest, Colonel Tomlins got leave of absence for six months, and soon joined his mistress at Paris. His arrival and attendance upon the ladies, awakened the suspicion of one or two of their father's friends, by whom they had been patronized,

patronized, and introduced to the King and Queen. To be brief, Colonel Tomlins, by his good conduct, soon gained them over to his side; they undertook his cause, and pleaded it with so much earnestness, as to obtain the Earl's consent to the young people's marriage; which was accordingly celebrated soon after, at the Ambassador's chapel in Paris, the friendly Baronet, who had most effectually espoused the interests of Tomlins, officiating as father on the occasion. The marriage did not occasion the tour to Italy to be relinquished; under the protection of Colonel Tomlins it could be accomplished with much more propriety, than under the auspices of the person to whom the Earl had entrusted his two lovely daughters. On their return to England, Lady Olivia gave the strongest proof of her good sense, by conforming in every particular to the plan of life sketched out by her husband, to whom the Earl

gave

gave five thousand pounds, with a promise of as much more at his death; the interest of this sum, added to the Colonel's income, did not admit of their living very expensively.

Lady Selina despising her sister's grovelling domestic ideas, determined to be a prominent character in the circles of fashion. She wore her rouge like a Frenchwoman, and was highly gratified at being frequently taken for one. Her Italian tour had added considerably to her importance. A slight grammatical knowledge of that soft language, acquired before she visited the country where it was spoken, was not a little augmented by practice; and on her return to London, she gave up an hour every day to receive the instructions of one of the first teachers of the Italian tongue, whose time was too precious to be bestowed without a handsome equivalent in return. So far this

this was well, for Lady Selina was thorough mistress both of English and French, had a natural facility of acquiring languages, by habits of application and perseverance, which were peculiarly suited to such studies. She also drew and painted landscapes and flowers, had much ingenuity in the dispositions of her lights and shades, but not natural genius enough to give a character or expression to a set of features; she had therefore followed the advice of her drawing-master, and given up the study of heads.

Had Lady Selina fully comprehended the meaning of the magical words — *an accomplished woman*, she would have rested her pretensions to the character on the acquirements already enumerated; and in the cultivation of her mind, by reading and observation, for which by her judicious arrangement of time, and love of solitude, (in a morning)

ing) she was well fitted. Unfortunately, in a certain circle, no woman is now thought to merit the appellation of *accomplished*, unless she is a performer on some instrument of music. Lady Selina had been some years taught to play on the harpsichord without becoming a proficient. Some person, of whose judgment she thought more highly than it deserved, had told her, that only a slight knowledge of music was required to make a good singer; and with her voice, they were sure she would, under the tuition of *Signior M.* soon sing delightfully. All this might have been possible, if nature had not, amidst a profusion of other gifts, withheld from Lady Selina an ear for music; yet day after day did *Signior M.* receive his half-guinea, and as often did he praise the brilliant execution of his Right Honourable pupil. In time she discovered her mistake, and dismissed Signior her singing-master, saying, she

was

was going out of town for a month, and when again at leisure to take lessons from him, he should have due notice.

Now it was become an indispensable part of fashionable education to play on the harp. Lady Selina persuaded her father to purchase for her one of the finest toned instruments that ever was imported from Paris. Lady Di, and Lady Betty, and Miss Hill, and Lord knows who beside, had taken only twelve lessons from a celebrated player, and could, from their former knowledge of music, added to his instructions, play very prettily. The Sieur —— had not the patience of Signior M. he could not listen to the strains of his pupil, but he persuaded her, that she would sooner acquire the method of fingering, by hearing and seeing him play, than by touching the instrument

instrument herself. She believed him, and quietly paid the honest German half a guinea an hour, for hearing him practise what he was to perform in the evening.

Most sedulously did poor Lady Selina labour at the harp. Intending to surprise her *cheres amies*, she carefully concealed that she had such an instrument in her possession. Her hours of practice were from seven in the morning to noon, for she scarcely allowed herself time for breakfast; and if excellence in any art could follow unwearied diligence when contending against genius, Lady Selina would soon have rivalled Madam Krumpholtz. At noon, when her master arrived, she was so completely worn out with fatigue and weariness, that his plan of amusing her by his performance, was in every respect agreeable. At one, the harp was enshrined

enshrined in its green baize envellope, nor did it see the light till next morning at the usual hour.

Some weeks spent in this way, without accomplishing a single air, Lady Selina dismissed her German professor, in the same manner as she had her Italian singing-master. Obliged to keep late hours at night, this early rising without exercise, or air to brace the nervous system, added to vexation at such repeated disappointments, brought on a slow fever, which for a time, had very alarming symptoms. Mrs. Ormsby was now a widow, and having only sons who were abroad, or pursuing their studies at the university, she offered, on hearing of her niece's delicate state of health, to leave her own seat in Wales, to come up to London, and attend her wherever the physicians deemed it expedient for her to go.

This

This attention was peculiarly acceptable to Lord Castlemount, her brother, who had not leisure for considering what his daughter's complaints were; and if he had, a sick chamber and a low spirited person were his aversion; poor man, he had quite enough upon his hands to keep up his own spirits, tormented as he was with the wayward fancies of a termagant mistress, who very frequently insisted on parading Hyde Park in his coach and four, with the family arms, and outriders in his livery; the next day, probably in the same carriage, was seen the lovely invalid his daughter, accompanied by some of her intimates, who were driving off languor, by satyrizing the various characters that, like themselves, were taking the dust of the ring, in order to *see*, and *be seen*, instead of retiring *from* the smoke of the metropolis to breathe a purer air in some of the delightful villages with which it is surrounded.

A father

A father at all anxious for the reputation of his child, would have been fearful that some mistakes might have arisen in consequence of this indiscriminate use of his equipage; but the Earl of Castlemount seemed not to reflect on such trivial things, he was superior to censure, and *his* daughter ought to be prudent and virtuous, though one would have supposed he had taken pains to place her with persons the least likely to instil in her good principles, or inspire firmness; and in situations where, if the heart be not corrupted, and the mind vitiated, they at least can receive no impressions that deserve cherishing.

Such was the state in which Lady Selina and her father lived, when the good Mrs. Ormsby left her much-loved fields, where she had lived for thirty years, rarely during that time visiting the gayer scenes where her youth had been spent. Her father had never in-

 herited

herited the title, consequently she was only the Honourable Miss Ormsby, and marrying very early in life a cousin of her own, a gentleman of considerable landed property in Wales, who was disposed to reside on his own estate, she cheerfully complied with his wishes, and excepting two journeys to London, to have advice of physicians for her husband, and a triennial excursion to her brother's seat in Cheshire, she had for the last twenty years seldom moved thirty miles from her own habitation. Change of air being chiefly recommended to Lady Selina, her first excursion was to Tunbridge, where she soon recovered both her health and spirits; when however the company deserted that spot, she prevailed on her aunt to remove to Brighton, stating as a reason for wishing to go there, that the sea air would now completely renovate her.

They

They had not been long settled in a house on the Marine Parade, when Lady Selina sent a ticket to Normanton Lodge, to notify to Mrs. Rochford that she was in her neighbourhood. The card of invitation to her masquerade was all the answer returned, the good lady being too busy in preparation to admit of paying her compliments in person. Mrs. Ormsby remonstrated on the danger of catching cold, the chance of a relapse, the bad tendency of entertainments of such a nature, &c. &c. Lady Selina had been too long mistress of her own actions to bear controul from any one. She answered not her aunt's arguments, but declared that she was quite well, and was determined to go to Mrs. Rochford's; only she must lose no time in forming a proper party.

In the library she asked several of her acquaintance if they were going, and found little difficulty in obtaining

her wish. Miss Plimpton overhearing the conversation, felt a strong inclination to view so brilliant a scene, and a latent desire to disguise herself so as to torment Miss Neville, whose elevation to such a circle mortified her to the soul. The lady Miss Plimpton had accompanied to Brighton, was soon stimulated by her to procure tickets, which from her line of acquaintance required no great exertion of interest; Mrs. Rochford, on application, very readily giving more than a family could make use of themselves, only desiring that the name of the persons to whom she ordered them to be sent should be inserted in their hand-writing on the back of the tickets they gave to their friends. The character of a Weird Sister giving full scope to the malignancy of Miss Plimpton's disposition, it was on that account assumed by her. The oblique hints she had given on that evening to Miss Neville, respecting the

the Highlander, were only to be imputed to the vexation she endured from his neglect of herself, and his gallantry to the Pilgrim, whom by her dancing, and the colour of her hair, she soon recognized as the fair West Indian. Miss Plimpton knew not any more than Mr. Rochford did, who it was that personated the Caledonian, yet she contributed her aid towards strengthening suspicions that *he* had previously infused.

It is however time to return to the drawing-room of Normanton Lodge, where sits Mrs. Ormsby, questioning Constantia as to her relationship to the Rochford's, her family, &c. &c. One advantage derived from living in great cities, or mixing in extensive circles, is, that people have so many avocations and amusements, that they are little disposed to pry into the affairs of others. This is indeed sometimes carried to a

blameable excess, apathy of soul, and indifference to all that does not immediately interest themselves, leading the possessors of wealth and power, to overlook modest merit, which ever requires the fostering care of those who compose the higher ranks of society, to rescue them from that oblivion which too often is the fate of genius, depressed by poverty and disappointment. Mrs. Ormsby, from having lived so long surrounded by objects whose interests and views were perfectly known to her, seldom met with any person whose countenance and manner prepossessed her in their favour, without expressing a desire to be better acquainted with them; and though her motives for making certain enquiries were, as in the instance of Miss Neville, friendly, the questions she sometimes asked sounded, to a polished ear, rather abrupt. She had, indeed, heard enough from Lady Selina of this young lady's history,

history, to excite more than a common degree of inquisitiveness, which in a summary way was gratified, previous to the return of the two ladies.

Lady Selina, since abandoning the harp, had taken to the study of botany; and her taste in drawing and colouring flowers from nature was here successfully exerted. Among other works of natural history, which such pursuit led her to peruse, were learned dissertations on the various classes of shells and fossils; and she retained a sufficient portion of what she had read, to astonish Mrs. Rochford by her *profundity* and quickness in arranging the beautiful shells displayed to her view. When the ladies were one party, Mrs. Rochford proposed going into the garden to see if they could fix on a proper place for the erection of a grotto, which she intended should rival that of the Bard of Twickenham, without recol-

lecting that it was principally the fame of Mr. Pope that had given celebrity to that, so frequently visited by the lovers of poetry, and the beauties of landscape, a taste for both of which may be cultivated to such advantage on the banks of the Thames.

Lady Selina had been not a little mortified by the apparent inattention of the master of the house to her during dinner-time. To punish him for this slight, she was determined when the gentlemen came up to tea, to display all her talents, both natural and acquired; and in order that Mrs. Rochford might assist her to do so, she departed from her usual habits and inclinations, which never led her to seek to make herself agreeable to her own sex, if we except a chosen few whom she styled her *cheres amies*. Her compliance with the request of her hostess to perambulate the garden, was an exertion

ertion of politeness that demanded a reward, for she made it a rule never to take any exercise after dinner; in this however was not included, dancing, walking on the Stein, in Kensington Gardens, or any other public walk, provided they were crowded with good company. She had address enough to conclude the search for a spot whereon to rear a structure of shell-work, by early complaining of the dampness of the grass; and suggesting that mid-day would be the best time to pursue it. Mrs. Ormsby and Miss Neville, but for a little side chat together, would have been mere spectators, the other ladies being too much occupied with each other, to consider it at all necessary to pay general attentions.

Mr. Athersy, who was at table placed at too great a distance from Lady Selina to enter into conversation with her, escaped from the bottle as early as he

could, that he might have an opportunity of paying court to a lady of her consequence and brilliant talents; her pretensions to wit and sense having been universally allowed by the *haut ton* both of Paris and London. Though the charming Lady Selina would have disdainfully rejected the compliments of Mr. Athersey in Grosvenor-square, or at St. James's, in Sussex they were most welcome, particularly as she meant by receiving them to pique Mr. Rochford.

Strange as it may appear, Lady Selina, without thinking of losing her reputation, prided herself on holding married men in her train of adorers; and she not unfrequently entered into a correspondence with such of them who had a taste for the fine arts, upon the possibility of obtaining some scarce and valuable drawing, or some book out of print, which she wished them to procure

cure for her. An intercourse by letter once begun, can easily be protracted, though the object which occasioned its commencement should have been long since obtained. The flattering encomiums on the elegance of style, and ease of expression of their fair correspondent, added to the regret that the restraints so arbitrarily imposed by custom, prevent their enjoying her society, except when surrounded by company, feeds the vanity of one who is truly covetous of attentions that ought to be the property of another, and has her heart so fortified by ideas of rank and situation, that no inflammable spark can there find admission. Despising the understanding of Mrs. Rochford, and by no means fearing the powers of one whom she considered as an humble companion, Lady Selina calculated upon receiving the homage of every man she had seen at dinner, each of whom should after having experienced

the refulgency of her abilities, lament his own want of discernment in not earlier seeking to subdue the reserve with which she then chose to be shrouded.

Mr. Athersey had been at Paris, and was very ambitious of telling all who would listen to him, how many fine things the Queen of France had said of him, some in his hearing, but most of them confidentially to those about her person. Had not Mr. Rochford and another gentleman entered at this critical period, Lady Selina's contempt would have manifested itself by some visible marks; this hero of his own tale was soon silenced by the presence of other lords of the creation, it being only to the weaker vessels he could venture to retail praises of himself. In an instant Mrs. Rochford began to tell her husband how much she had been obliged to her ladyship for arranging her

her shells, that she was going to assist her in building a grotto, and that in short she was the cleverest and best tempered, as well as the most accomplished woman she had seen for a long time; and the Earl might well be proud of such a daughter. This gross adulation had on the hearer an effect diametrically opposite to what the speaker, or the person so praised, either expected or intended.

Mr. Rochford saw what were the views of Lady Selina, in thus opening a masked battery on his wife, for he was no stranger to some of her plots; and he determined that on this occasion the *knowing one*, to use the language of the turf, should be taken in. No man would have liked better to amuse himself with so fine a woman as her ladyship, than Mr. Rochford, if he had not conceived that the least gallantry to another would display his real character

to

to Miss Neville, with whom, according to *his* ideas, he was *desperately in love*, and to obtain a smile of approbation from whom, he would willingly have mortified all the Earls' daughters in the county. Paying to Lady Selina some forced cold compliment, Mr. Rochford sat down by Mrs. Ormsby, with whom he conversed on the country she had lived in for so many years, descanting with much fluency on the beautiful wild prospects of the principality, the manners of its ancient inhabitants contrasted with the present, and other topics by which that lady could be interested, though she might not be qualified to join in discussing them.

Miss Neville, from sitting near Mrs. Ormsby, was of the party, and when appealed to for her opinion, could not avoid giving it freely, and stating her reasons why there should be a shade of difference on such points. Lady Selina

mortified

mortified still more at being considered a secondary character, than she would have been by entire neglect, endeavoured to make the conversation general, by talking of the Ancient Druids, of whom she seemed to have very little knowledge beyond what she had acquired from reading Gray's Ode. Mr. Rochford, who chose that Miss Neville, rather than himself, should set her ladyship right, forced the former to enter more fully on the sacrificing of human victims, and other customs equally prejudicial to the interests of humanity, which the bards of ancient Britain were known to have practised.

Eager to quit historic ground for that on which accuracy is not so absolutely necessary, Lady Selina with surprising volubility ran over the merits of several new productions, of which she appeared to have read little more than the extracts given by the different reviewers, whose

whose sentiments, and critical remarks, she retailed as if they were her own. Even here her sarcastic host would not let her pass without some animadversions; he stated his reasons for believing Lady Selina had not perused the whole of the work then the subject of conversation, otherwise she would have found some of her objections answered by the author himself. Here again was Lady Selina's evil genius in the shape of Miss Neville appealed to for a corroboration of this assertion; Mr. Rochford being well convinced that she never read a book inattentively, and that now under discussion, he knew was on its first publication frequently in her hand. Mr. Athersey, and the inoffensive non-entity, who had staid to finish another bottle with his landlord, declined taking any part with such able disputants, contenting themselves with remarking to Mrs. Rochford, which of them they thought supported the argument

ment with most spirit; the votes of this triumvirate were generally in favour of Lady Selina, who, when failing in real materials for discourse, took the tone as if she were *quizzing* those to whose superiority of talents she was inwardly bowing.

Mortified to the soul at the deference paid to the opinions of Miss Neville, whom nobody knew, nor cared for, and this too by the only man in the room who she considered in possession of any discriminating powers, Lady Selina determined as her *dernier resort*, to bring forward her favourite doctrine of Platonicism. Like the old man in the Vicar of Wakefield, who astonished his auditors by his erudition, from merely ringing changes on the words *cosmogony*, and the *Creation of the World*, this lady had frequently dazzled the imaginations of her's by dwelling on the delights of friendship, the advantages

resulting from an union of kindred minds, and railing at the grovelling conceptions of those who believed such intercourse with persons of different sexes could be productive of evil.

This was delicate ground for Mr. Rochford, he durst not oppose Lady Selina, lest at a future period the fair object of his adoration should remind him of the essential difference between his theory and practice; most heartily wishing this *soi disant* Platonist some miles from Normanton Lodge, he yet could not help ardently desiring a *tête a tête*, that he might try whether the large black eyes, whose glances were sometimes directed towards him, did not tell bolder truths, and indicate more strongly what passed within, than the words that issued from the lips of the fair declaimer.

Being

Being thus left, as it were mistress of the field, Lady Selina, not a little inflated by success (to which weakness much abler generals are equally liable) thinking to make her triumph more complete, appealed in a direct manner to Miss Neville, for her opinion of the celebrated letters from Yorick to Eliza, for which she declared her enthusiastic admiration, and as a proof how far it had been carried, stated her having translated the whole work into Italian, which she had afterwards got a professor of the language to correct; notwithstanding all this pains bestowed on the manuscript, in removing from one place to another, it was unfortunately lost. Miss Neville, to avoid delivering sentiments totally opposite to those apparently cherished as sacred by her Ladyship, merely gave her tribute of praise to the beauties of the composition and easy elegance of style, which were superior as epistolary effusions to any she had

had ever read, while she lamented that those who were judges of the Italian language, had not had an opportunity of reading the produce of her industry and ability, a loss the more to be regretted by an English reader, as approbation to a first effort might have induced one so capable of transfusing the spirit of an author into another language, to favour them, by translating *from* the Italian, works which would be considered a desirable accession to English literature.

Acceptable as this compliment was, Lady Selina was determined that Miss Neville should, in more explicit terms, avow her approbation of the intimacy between Sterne and his amiable correspondent; never supposing for a moment, that so obscure a person would venture to express disapprobation, although she might be singular enough to entertain any. Here, however, she soon found

found herself in an error. Miss Neville, on this appeal, with modest firmness, said, "she had not experienced equal pleasure in the perusal of the letters, as she was certain she would have done had the parties by whom they were written been wholly unknown."

"There we differ," replied Lady Selina; "in addition to their intrinsic merit, they have a double value in my eyes, because I can personify both Yorick and Eliza."

"So far I might be disposed to join issue with your ladyship, if I could forget that Mr. S——— and Mrs. D—— had entered into engagements, which made an indulgence of that ardent attachment improper."

Lady Selina, "What objection could the most rigid moralist have to *my* cherishing

cherishing an affection from an amiable man whose sentiments and ideas correspond so exactly with my own, as did L——— S——— with Eliza D——?"

Miss Neville. "It is not a case in point, my dear Lady Selina, *you* are withheld by no ties, *you* have not vowed fidelity to another, Mrs. D——— had."

Rochford, who felt too much interested in the subject to preserve his accustomed caution, immediately said, "if Mrs. D——— had been so unfortunate as to unite herself to a man whom she could neither love nor respect, he thought her quite justifiable in returning the affection of the man who it was evident had touched her heart."

Lady Selina took another view of the question, contending that S——— was

the lover of the mind of Mrs. D —— who might regard him as such, without swerving from the duty she owed to Mr. D——— as her husband.

"I am sorry," replied Miss Neville, "to be obliged to contend against two such powerful opponents, whom I despair of convincing, as much as I doubt the possibility of my becoming a proselyte to the doctrines of either."

"We are open to conviction, my dear Miss Neville," said Rochford, "pray give us more in detail your reasons for disapproving of the correspondence in question."

"If I must enter so minutely into the subject, I hope Lady Selina will pardon me for asking her, if she thinks a divine and a moralist justifiable in seeking to lower a husband and the father of her children,

children, in the opinion of a woman of virtue and understanding?"

"I deny that such an attempt is made," said Lady Selina.

"Do you not recollect where Mr. D——— is described as a sordid character, arbitrarily ordering a lovely interesting woman, who has the misfortune to be under his controul, to a climate hostile to her constitution, merely because he does not choose to supply her with the sums requisite for remaining where health and peace were in her possession?" No person appearing disposed to interrupt her, after a pause Miss Neville proceeded. "A man, who had been the real friend which S—— only pretended himself to be, while he lamented the necessity which propelled Mr. D——— to request his wife to return to sultry climes, before

fore she had benefited as much by a residence in England, as a longer stay might have rendered probable, would at the same time have commended his liberality in furnishing her with the means for quitting India in search of health, a voyage to and from England being at that time a more serious and expensive undertaking than it is at present. He would also, in bestowing praises on the talents and virtues of the wife, have commended the fortitude of the husband, who rather than lose the chance of providing for the dear pledges of mutual affection, by abandoning a lucrative situation, was content to submit to privations of domestic comfort, which her absence must necessarily occasion. We have no proof that Mr. and Mrs. D———— lived otherwise than happily together, previous to the latter embarking for England. I think he must be more than man, if he could read unmoved those letters of Sterne to

his wife, which expressly declared, that when the winds wafted her vessel from the shores of his native country, there was not an object left behind to cheer him for her absence, or to fill the void in his heart, which a separation from her made. In reflecting on the pathos and expression beaming in every line, I tried, but in vain, to forget that this man had both a wife and daughter, to whom, in sending forth such sentiments to the world, he was guilty of the highest and most flagrant injustice."

Lady Selina, a little crest-fallen, declared as they could not agree, the subject had better be dropped. Mr. Rochford, compelled to own the force of Miss Neville's reasoning, asked in a half whisper, "how long she had accustomed herself to reflect so deeply on such subjects ?"

"Since

" Since I possessed reasoning faculties; I have not looked at the letters these five years."

Mrs. Ormsby now gave more than silent approbation to her new friend, while she solicited a continuance of an acquaintance so happily begun. Next to Lady Selina, there was none of the party so mortified as Mrs. Rochford; as a married woman, she could not but feel the justice and propriety of Miss Neville's remarks, though she was more vexed at her having refuted her ladyship, than if the brilliancy of wit of the latter, had overpowered the solid sense of the former. Frequently compelled internally to yield to the better judgment of her plebeian friend, she had been a good deal elated at discovering that one of her own circle, a *Right Honourable*, was also fraught with knowledge, and that too, to her perceptions, of a much superior value to any possessed

sessed by the former. In taking leave, Lady Selina discovered that the object of her visit was wholly defeated; Mr. Rochford taking the hand of Mrs Ormsby to lead her to her carriage, she was compelled to give hers to Mr. Athersey, or go out unattended.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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